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FOR  
BIBLE CLASSES

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ROMANS

BY

*Rev. Principal Brown, D.D.*



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EDITED BY

REV. MARCUS DODS, D.D.,

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*THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.*

EDINBURGH:  
T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.  
1883



PRINTED BY MORRISON AND GIBB,

FOR

T. & T. CLARK, EDINBURGH.

LONDON, . . . . HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.

DUBLIN, . . . . GEORGE HERBERT.

NEW YORK, . . . . SCRIBNER AND WELFORD

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COLLEGE, ABERDEEN.



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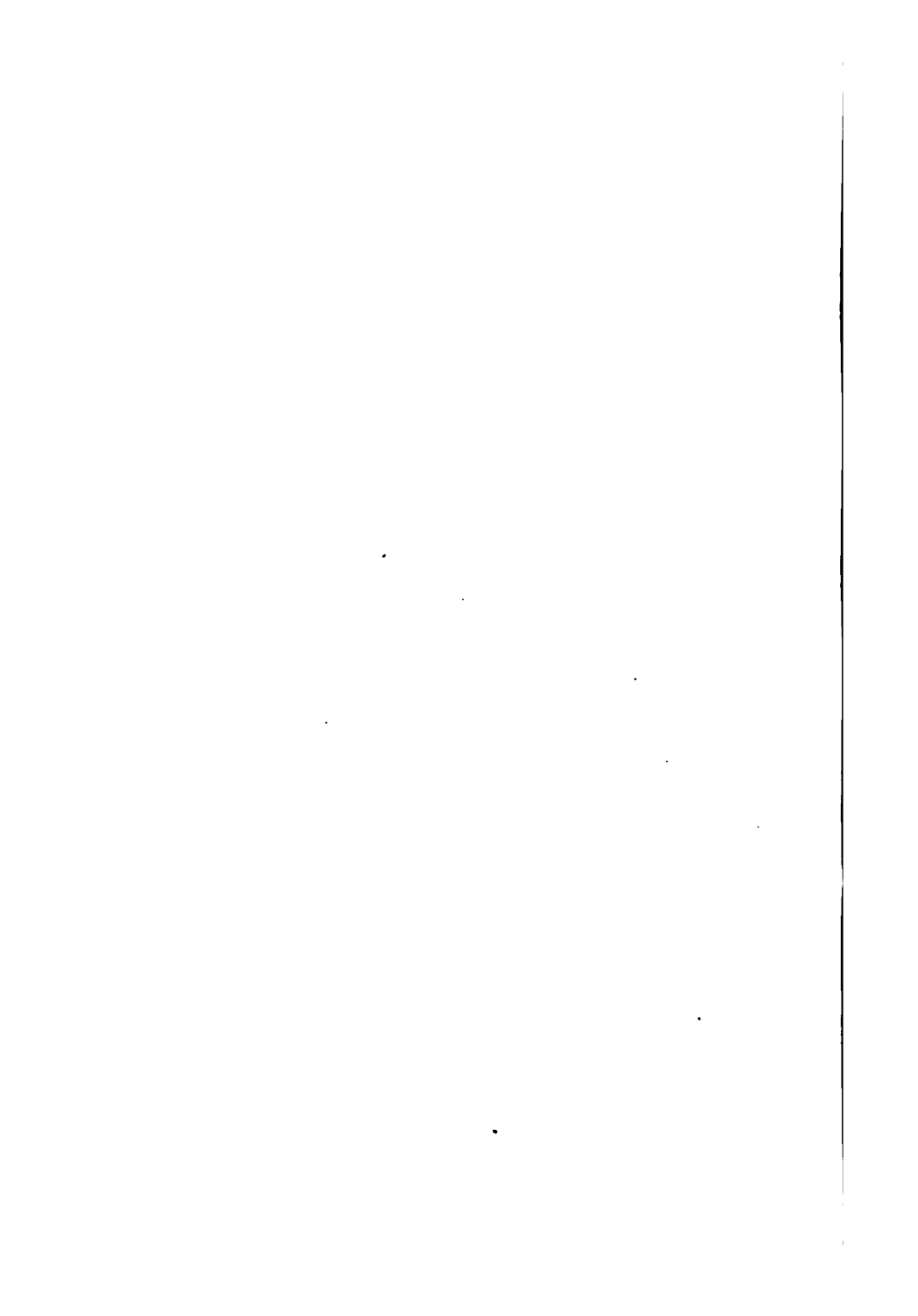
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## ABBREVIATIONS.



A. V. . . . .	AUTHORISED VERSION
R. V. . . . .	REVISED VERSION.
LXX. . . . .	SEPTUAGINT.
<i>Gr.</i> . . . . .	GREEK.



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# INTRODUCTION.

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## I.—AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

THAT this Epistle is a genuine production of the Apostle Paul is beyond all dispute. It is admitted even by the most advanced critics of the negative or destructive school. If external evidence is required, it is certain that before the close of the first century it was quoted or referred to by Clement of Rome in his Letter to the Corinthian Church ; by Justin Martyr in the middle and by Irenæus before the close of the second century ; in the precious Epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons, as also by Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian, in the third century ; and recognised by all succeeding writers, both orthodox and heretical, as canonical Scripture. And so fully does internal evidence attest its genuineness, that it is impossible to have any rational doubt about it. On the doubt that has been thrown on the two last chapters, and the closing doxology, we need only refer the reader to the notes on those places.

## II.—THE TRAINING OF THE WRITER.

Nothing is more certain than that the future of every man is largely determined by the *time, place, and circumstances* of his birth. In the writer of this Epistle it was pre-eminently so. In fact, to this view of his whole destiny—as Divinely shaped out from the very day of his birth—he himself clearly alludes, in these remarkable words to the Galatians : “When it pleased God, who separated me, *even* from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son



in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal. i. 15, 16).

His birth-place was Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, an extensive region lying along the northern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and stretching from Pamphylia on the west to the north-eastern extremity of that Sea, while northward it extended over the great mountain-mass of Taurus to Lycaonia. The western half of that region was called 'Cilicia the Rough,' from its mountainous character; the eastern half of it, from its level character, got the name of 'Cilicia the Flat' or 'the Plain.' In this eastern division lay Tarsus, but near its western border. The ancient inhabitants of this region were probably of Syrian descent; the Greek colonists date perhaps from the time of Alexander the Great, while the Romans stepped in only about a century before Christ, at first only to put down piracy, but eventually making themselves masters of the whole region. In its literary advantages, Tarsus, says Strabo the geographer, excelled even Athens and Alexandria, Greek being the language of the educated classes. Well, then, might our apostle say he was "a citizen of no mean city" (Acts xxi. 39). The precise year of his birth is uncertain, but it was probably not many years later than that of our Lord. His father being a Roman citizen, that valuable privilege was to him a birthright (Acts xxi. 28), of which he availed himself once and again with dignified effect (Acts xvi. 37; xxi. 25-29). His father was a Pharisee, and as such he himself grew up (Acts xxiii. 6; Gal. i. 14; Phil. iii. 5). His family must have been in easy circumstances, since he was sent in early life to Jerusalem for his education, and there put under the best rabbinical training in the school of Gamaliel, "a doctor of the law, and had in reputation among all the people" (Acts v. 34), who, though of the strictest traditional type, shewed himself on one occasion a man of wisdom and moderation (Acts v. 34-40). How well he improved his educational opportunities appears from his own appeals long afterwards to his well-known Pharisaic rigidity (Acts xxii. 3, xxvi. 4, 5). The rabbins, having no pay, were all brought up to some trade, as indeed were the best families. That of Saul was tent-making (Acts xviii. 3)

—most likely his father's business. And a lucrative business it was in Cilicia ; for its goat's hair was much prized, being wrought into a coarse fabric (hence called *Cilicium*), which was used not only for tent-canvas, but for the outer coats of soldiers and sailors. During his stay among the churches which sprang up under his ministry, our apostle made noble use of this early attainment, "working with labour and travail night and day that he might not be chargeable to any of them" (1 Thess. ii. 9 ; 2 Thess. iii. 8 ; Acts xx. 34 ; 1 Cor. iv. 12). His natural characteristics, so far as they can be gathered from his life and writings, seem to have been a masterful and versatile intellect, capable alike of profound thought and close reasoning, a rare combination of masculine courage and womanly tenderness, a combination too of impetuous zeal, sound discretion, and indomitable perseverance ; in character straightforward and honest, and in the discharge of duty, as he understood it, such that he could say of his unconverted self, "as touching the righteousness that is in the law" he was "blameless" (Phil. iii. 6).

By the time that the great change came over him—probably in 37 or 38 A.D.—the progress of the Gospel was irritating to the utmost the powerful Sadducean ecclesiastics, to whose views the preaching of the resurrection, in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, was fatal ; while the Pharisees were no less enraged at the reported preaching of Stephen, that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the temple and change the customs that Moses delivered them (Acts vi. 14). To a young zealot like Saul, this would seem treason to the national religion ; and when it was determined that Stephen should be stoned to death according to the law (Lev. xxiv. 16), he would readily accept the prominent part assigned him in that cruel mode of execution. With a thrilling simplicity this is mentioned as his post (Acts vii. 58), and alluded to many years after by himself, in evidence of his virulence then against the name of Jesus (Acts xxii. 20).

The facts of his conversion need not be repeated here. But it is with a marked emphasis that the historian says his persecuting rage against the Christians burned as fiercely as ever up to the very moment of the change : "And Saul, *yet* breathing out threatnings

and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest," etc. (Acts ix. 1). Critics, in order to blunt the force of this testimony to the suddenness of the change, imagine all manner of troubled thoughts, and better feelings, and doubts whether the saintly martyr Stephen might not have been right after all, which would help to prepare his spirit for the change. But even if the high-handed errand on which he was going to Damascus were not proof enough that his participation in the death of Stephen had only deepened his determination to stamp out the hated thing, his own affecting references to it once and again in after life ought to preclude all supposition of the least relenting up to the very last moment. For Damascus, accordingly, he sets out (a distance of 130 miles from Jerusalem), with ecclesiastical authority to hunt out the Christians there, "whether men or women, and bring them bound to Jerusalem." As he "came nigh to Damascus," we may fancy him revolving his plan of procedure, and flattering himself he would make a clean sweep of the Christian name, when "at mid-day, a light above the brightness of the sun"—rare brightness, surely, to dim the brightness of a noon-day sun in the East—"shone round about him," struck him to the ground, and blinded him. But far more astounding was the internal revolution, such that when referring to it nearly thirty years after, he cannot change one of the overpowering words which he heard from the heavens, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?"—even the thrilling tenderness of the reduplication of his name not omitted. In a moment the conviction flashes upon him, 'Ah! the Christians I go to destroy are right after all. The Crucified is risen indeed, enthroned in glory, and Him it is I am persecuting! And He has spoken to *me*, His deadly enemy, and laid on me so tender an arrest, ere that bloody work of mine was begun! Henceforth I am His.' Soft as wax before the fire, he utters the plaintive but pregnant cry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" In answer he is told that in the city whither he is going he shall learn all that. He enters the city, but "for three days he did neither eat nor drink" (took no regular meal; compare Acts xxvii. 33). But, O, what three days must these have been!—the great turning-point, as I

believe, at once in his theological and spiritual history. All that rabbinical training in the sense of the Old Testament and the expected future of his nation, with all his confidence of Divine acceptance built upon it—where is it now? Gone, never to return! What self-abasement, what death of legal hope, what annihilation of all that had swelled his proud heart! But anon, what heart-breaking admiration of the grace that had arrested him, and what rising, kindling hope that there must be some purpose of love in it! What if it should be to “preach the faith which once I destroyed”? Can this, then, be the true key to the Old Testament? If so, to me henceforth it must be a new book. As a child at his alphabet, he will now open it with other eyes than ever before. Even already, gleams of a new light he seems to see in it. The whole traditional system of Jewish thought on the subject of religion, and the sense of the Old Testament, stands up before him only to disclose to him the fallacy of it all, while in place of it there rises—though as yet only in germ—something of that profound insight into the real import of the Old Testament, that masterful grasp of the great principles of the Divine economy, that deep spirituality, that vivid apprehension of man’s lost state and the way of recovery, that power of subtle analysis of the various stages and phases of religious experience, that large philanthropy and burning zeal to spend and be spent for Christ, which mark all the writings, but pre-eminently this Epistle, of the chiefest of the apostles and greatest of men.

With what dread his entry into Damascus was awaited by the disciples, whom the tidings of his approach had reached, we see in devout Ananias, who, when ordered to visit one called Saul of Tarsus, shudders at the name. But what would be his amazement when told that already he was a disciple, and destined to bear that Name, so recently hated, “before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel”! They meet, and at the touch of Ananias the scales fall from the blind eyes; and after a few days’ stay with the disciples—no longer terrified at his approach—“straightway he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God.” Like some pent-up flood bursting all its banks, and rolling impetuously along, “Saul increased the more in strength,

and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ." But as this almost cost him his life, he escapes from the city as by a hair's-breadth, and retires into Arabia (Gal. i. 17)—for much needed repose after the intense strain which the great change must have given him, and the exhausting and hazardous work that immediately followed it; but even more, perhaps, for thorough study of the Scriptures with the new key to it he had now found. How long he stayed there is uncertain; but the "three years" of Gal. i. 18 probably fill up the whole period from his conversion to his first visit to Jerusalem as a Christian. The immediate object of this visit was to "make the acquaintance of Peter" (as the word in Gal. i. 18 means); but as the terror of his name still hung over the disciples there, Barnabas had to tell them the whole story of his conversion and subsequent preaching ere they could be satisfied that all was right. He now boldly resumed his powerful preaching among the Greek-speaking Jews, but his glorified Lord—who appeared to him while entranced in the temple—warned him to take speedy flight from the city, where a plot against his life had already been formed. To him it appeared incredible that they could resist the testimony of one who had so zealously done their bloody work against the Christians, till overpowered by resistless evidence of his error. To this the only answer was, "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts xxii. 17–21). So "the brethren brought him down to Cæsarea and sent him forth to Tarsus" (ix. 30), his native home. There he was far from idle; for long after this we read that on his second missionary journey, "he went through *Syria and Cilicia*,<sup>1</sup> confirming the churches" (Acts xv. 41)—churches, no doubt, founded by himself at this time (compare ver. 23, and Gal. i. 22). Probably it was now, when he had to encounter the dangerous passes and impetuous rivers of the Taurus range of mountains, that he had some of those "journeyings often," and was "in perils of rivers and perils of robbers, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness," to which he refers in 2 Cor. xi. 26, 27.

<sup>1</sup> Though Syria, as the more important district, is always first mentioned, he doubtless began with his own region, Cilicia.

But he was not to be allowed to stay too long out of public view, even in gathering converts and rearing little churches in those regions. He is wanted at Antioch, and the one man who seems to have taken the measure of his great qualities and foreseen his high destiny—himself unexpectedly drawn into work for Christ there, the marvellous success of which was proving too much for him—repairs to Tarsus in search of Saul as his fellow-worker, a sphere which developed his capacity for the still higher services awaiting him.

Antioch—already the Alexandria of the East, as the seat and centre of every kind of learning and culture—was now gaining to itself a new distinction. "They that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen had gone everywhere preaching the word," but "to the Jews only. But some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene," thinking that what had proved glad tidings to Jews was no less needed by Gentiles, and ought to be as welcome to them—"when they came to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks."<sup>1</sup> And to their astonishment and joy, no doubt, "the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number of them believed and turned unto the Lord" (Acts xi. 19-21). Immediately the news flew to Jerusalem, and Barnabas, the man probably of all others at the metropolis of most weight for judgment and discretion, was despatched in order to inquire and report on so startling a novelty. With quick instinct—being "a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith"—he at once "saw the grace of God" in these converts, "was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." And not only so, but, instead of returning to the capital to give in his report in person, he threw himself into this new field of labour, and under his hand "much people was added unto the Lord." He must therefore have Saul to help him, and on their return "it came to pass that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people." And Antioch has become for ever memorable for this, that "the disciples were called

<sup>1</sup> Not "Grecians," or "Greek-speaking Jews" (as our Authorised Version renders it), for to them they had been preaching ever since the day of Pentecost, but to the heathen "Greeks" of that city.

CHRISTIANS first in Antioch."<sup>1</sup> So robust was the Christianity of this first Gentile church, that on tidings reaching them of a great dearth that was reducing the poor Jewish converts at Jerusalem to straits, they raised a contribution for them and despatched it by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, thereby doing their best to soften their Jewish prejudices against Gentile converts.

But this brings us to the great events that marked out Saul of Tarsus as henceforth to be known as "Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ." The church at Antioch was rich in "prophets and teachers," of whom five are named in Acts xiii. 1. "While they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said"—no doubt by the mouth of one of those prophets—"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and sent them away." At Paphos, in the west end of the island of Cyprus, while they were preaching the Word of God before the Proconsul of the island, a Jewish sorcerer, under the spell of whose influence he seems to have come, "sought to turn aside the Proconsul from the faith;" whereupon the soul of our young missionary swelled, and a mighty power of the Spirit coming upon him, he uttered such a withering rebuke, and called down upon him such a blinding judgment, that not only was the Proconsul won to the faith, but now Barnabas sinks into the background; and PAUL—by which name we are now alone to know him—having his call to the apostleship so signally sealed, is henceforward the great figure on the historic canvas.

The subsequent events are well enough known. His First Missionary Journey—embracing, besides Cyprus, Perga in Pamphylia, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium at the foot of Mount Taurus, and two cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, with the return journey to all those places—was memorable, not only for the persecution which drove them from place to place for their lives, but for the glorious success

<sup>1</sup> The form of the word "Christianoi" would seem to indicate that this name originated, not with themselves, but with those outside of them. And we take the explanation to be this, that "Christ" was so constantly upon the lips of the disciples and their preachers, that those whom they came in contact with talked of them as those 'Christ-people,' or Christians.

of their work in "opening the door of faith to the Gentiles" of all those parts.

On their return to Antioch, this vigorous church of uncircumcised believers was no sooner cheered by the tidings brought them of so large an accession of Gentile converts, than they were troubled by emissaries from Judea, zealots for the law, who tried to persuade them that unless they submitted to circumcision after the manner of Moses, they had no share in the grace of the new covenant, and so could not be saved ; and though Paul and Barnabas resolutely withstood them, it was determined, as the only way of settling the matter, to despatch those two trusted men, and certain others with them, to Jerusalem, that in a full conclave of "apostles and elders" the matter might be authoritatively set at rest. By the unanimous decision of this council the zealots were silenced, and a circular letter to the Gentile church "in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia," diffused rest and joy among all the uncircumcised believers, besides making still clearer to Paul and Barnabas the equal standing of Jew and Gentile in the common salvation.

To pursue our apostle's course further is unnecessary, so far as his preparation for so great a service to the Church of Christ in all ages as the writing of this priceless Epistle is concerned. We need only add that the missionary spirit burned too fervently in his bosom, and the words of his glorified Lord to Ananias concerning him—"Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel ; for I will shew him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake"—would ring too constantly in his ears to let him stay too long at Antioch, ministering to this or any one settled church. A Second Missionary Journey is proposed and carried out, and this time he is divinely ordered into Europe, there to break ground for his Master ; and under his hand and his fellow-labourers', churches sprang up in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, and Ephesus, in the record of which one knows not whether most to wonder at the triumphant progress of those missionaries of the cross, or their heroic endurance of the life-and-death struggles at the cost of which their victories



were achieved. With what affection our apostle followed those churches ever after, how constantly he held them up in prayer before Him who sent him, with what jealousy he watched their spiritual condition, and with what wisdom and tenderness he counselled them, is to be seen in the Epistles which he wrote to them, and which remain to the Church as a legacy of the Master for all time.

But ROME, for obvious reasons, would, we cannot doubt, be above all other places to be visited upon the heart of our vast-minded apostle. In fact he tells the Roman Christians, that but for unavoidable hindrances he would have come to them long before he addressed to them this Letter (i. 13). One of those hindrances, however, had at length been removed. Acting, as he ever did, on the principle of "not building on another man's foundation," and the whole region from which he was writing this letter being now evangelized, he could look forward with some good hope of at length being able to visit the Christians of the world's capital (xv. 23, 24). But meantime he will write to prepare them for his visit.

But had that been all his object in writing, we should not have had such a Letter as this ; nor does the Epistle itself disclose anything in the condition of the Roman Christians to call forth its weighty contents. We are thrown back, then, upon the state of the apostle's own mind at the time when he wrote this letter, for the moving cause of its being written at all. We have seen how, from the outset of his "preaching Jesus, that He is the Son of God," and "confounding the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ" (Acts ix. 20, 22), how his great work, until he came to Antioch, was to establish what he expresses in the first four verses of this Epistle—that Jesus is the predicted Messiah of the Old Testament Scriptures, "made of the seed of David according to the flesh," but at the same time "the Son of God." But at Antioch, the conversion of uncircumcised Gentiles to the faith of the Gospel raised a new question, Must all such "be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses in order to be saved"? With the quick instinct, as we have said, of Christian experience, rather than from any formed

judgment upon the question, Barnabas, at once recognising the reality of the work at Antioch, regarded them, as a necessary consequence, as on a full equality with himself, as a Jewish believer, in "the grace of God." And so thoroughly of one mind with him was our apostle, that henceforth his life was spent in proclaiming, and his teaching mainly devoted to the establishment of, this great fundamental truth of the Gospel, that for Jew and Gentile alike there is but one way of salvation—by free grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

At some times, of course, more than others, this truth, and the necessity of pressing it, would be borne in upon our apostle's spirit; and it would be vain to inquire what moved him at this particular time to lay down formally, and once for all, its great principles, its bearing on the position of the natural seed of Abraham in the Divine plan, and its proper practical issues. The only question of real interest is, Why was this done in a letter to the Roman Christians, rather than to any others? to which it may be enough to reply, that having already written to the Thessalonian, Galatian, and Corinthian churches, on matters pertaining to themselves, as his own children in the faith, it would seem both more fitting in itself that he should address this Letter to those whose conversion was instrumentally due to others, and more complimentary—if we may use such a word—to Christians honoured to witness for the Gospel in the great metropolis, to address to them this fullest and richest exhibition of the Gospel in all its theological, experimental, and practical bearings.

### III.—WHEN AND WHERE THIS EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

We have the means of determining this with great precision from the Epistle itself, when compared with the Acts of the Apostles. Up to the date of it, the apostle had never been at Rome (chap. i. 11, 13, 15). He was then on the eve of visiting Jerusalem, with a pecuniary contribution for its poor Jewish converts from the Gentile churches of Macedonia and Achaia, after which his purpose was to pay a visit

to Rome, on his way to Spain (chap. xv. 23-28). Now this contribution we know that he carried with him from Corinth, at the close of his third visit to that city, which lasted for three months (Acts xx. 2, 3, xxiv. 17). Further, on this occasion there accompanied him from Corinth certain persons whose names are given by the historian of the Acts (chap. xx. 4), and four of these are expressly mentioned in our Epistle as being with our apostle when he wrote it—Timothy, Sosipater, Gaius, and Erastus (chap. xvi. 21, 23). Of these four, Gaius was an inhabitant of Corinth (1 Cor. i. 14), and Erastus was "the chamberlain (probably 'treasurer') of *the city*" (Rom. xvi. 23), which city can hardly be other than Corinth. Finally, Phœbe—the bearer, as appears, of this Epistle—was a deaconess of the church at Cenchræa, which was the eastern port of Corinth itself (chap. xvi. 1). Putting these facts together, it is impossible to resist the conviction—in which all critics agree—that *Corinth* was the place from which the Epistle was written, and that it was despatched about the time of the visit above mentioned, probably in the early spring of the year A.D. 58.

#### IV.—ORIGIN OF THE ROMAN CHURCH.

That this church owed its origin to the Apostle Peter, and that he was its first bishop, though an ancient tradition and taught in the modern Church of Rome as a fact not to be doubted, is refuted by the clearest evidence, and is no longer maintained by intelligent and candid Romanists. If it were true, how could so important a circumstance have been passed by in silence by the historian of the Acts, not only in his account of Peter's labours, but when he came to relate our apostle's approach to the metropolis, the deputations of Roman "brethren" that came to meet him, and his two years' labours there? And how are we to understand the apostle's anxious desire to "have some fruit among them also, even as among other Gentiles" (chap. i. 13), consistently with his known principle "not to build on another man's foundation" (chap. xv. 20), if all the while he knew that they had had the apostle of the circum-

cision for their spiritual father, and that he may have been among them at that very time? And further, among the many salutations to persons certainly not remarkable among the churches, how is it that there is none to Peter; or, if we suppose it known that he was elsewhere at that particular time, how is it that in all the Epistles which our apostle afterwards wrote from Rome itself he makes no allusion to its having Peter for its spiritual father?

The same considerations render it all but certain that this church owed its origin to no apostle, nor even any prominent evangelist. But there can be no difficulty in understanding how the elements of a Christian church would soon spring up there. That a large number of Jews and heathen proselytes to the Jewish faith resided at this time in Rome, is known to all who are familiar with the classical and Jewish writers of that and the immediately subsequent periods; that numbers of these were at Jerusalem on the great day of Pentecost we know from Acts ii. 10; that the three thousand who were converted on that day would include some of these, there can be little doubt; and that such, on their return to Rome, would tell the tidings to their relatives and friends, is equally certain. Besides, among the numerous visitors to the metropolis from all parts of the civilised world, there would doubtless be not a few who, having themselves felt the power of the Gospel, would be unable to keep it to themselves, and make it their business to spread the knowledge of it among their friends and acquaintances. Nor are there wanting indications that, among those to whom the salutations of this Epistle are sent, some were among the earliest converts to the Christian faith; others of them—who had made the apostle's acquaintance elsewhere, and who, if not his own spiritual children, probably owed much to his ministrations—seem to have charged themselves with the duty of cherishing and furthering the work of the Lord in the capital. And thus it would seem that, up to the time of the apostle's arrival in Rome, the Christian community in the metropolis had been dependent on subordinate and casual agency for its existing condition when the apostle wrote, though aided, it may be, by occasional visits of preachers from the provinces. It is a mistake,

we think, to suppose that it was in any such consolidated and organized condition as we should understand by the word *church*, when this letter was written. But it will not follow that living Christianity was in a less flourishing condition than in some other more fully organized churches to whom the apostle addressed Epistles. Those little peeps which the last chapter gives us into "the church that was in the house of Prisca and Aquila" (3-5), and "the brethren that were with the five," who are named in ver. 14, and "all the saints that were with other five," named in ver. 15, and the beautiful commendations of his "beloved Epænetus, the first-fruits of Asia unto Christ," and of those "kinsmen of his, who were of note among the apostles, and were in Christ before him," and of those two women "who laboured much in the Lord," etc.—seem clearly to shew that they statedly met for worship in small knots, while yet the words, "Salute one another with a holy kiss" (ver. 16), shew—what indeed we could not doubt—that they regarded themselves as one community, had means of easy communication with each other, and had all the elements of what would soon become a solid and influential body, a body which indeed too soon overshadowed other churches.

#### V.—WAS THE ROMAN CHURCH A JEWISH OR A GENTILE CHURCH?

This question has occasioned a great deal of unnecessary discussion. Certain it is that the apostle writes to them expressly as a Gentile church (chap. i. 13-15; xv. 15, 16); and though it is plain that there were Jewish Christians among them, and the whole argument of the Epistle presupposes a pretty intimate acquaintance on the part of his readers with the leading facts and principles of the Old Testament, this is sufficiently explained by supposing that the bulk of them had been Gentile proselytes to the Jewish faith before they embraced the Gospel, entering the pale of the Christian church through the gate of the ancient economy. Certainly, the names of

nearly all to whom salutations are sent in the closing chapter are Gentile, not Jewish.

It remains only to speak briefly of—

#### VI.—THE PLAN AND CHARACTER OF THIS EPISTLE.

Of all the undoubted Epistles of our apostle this is the most elaborate, and at the same time perhaps the most glowing. It has just as much in common with a theological treatise as is consistent with the freedom and warmth of a real letter. Referring to the headings which we have prefixed to its successive sections, as best exhibiting the progress of the argument and the connection of its points, we here merely note that its first great topic is what may be termed the *legal relation of man to God*, as a violator of His holy law, whether as merely written on the heart, as in the case of the heathen, or, in the case of the chosen people, as further known by external Revelation; that it next treats of that legal relation as wholly *reversed*, through believing connection with the Lord Jesus Christ; and that its third and last great topic is *the new life* which accompanies this change of relation, embracing at once a blessedness and a consecration to God, which, rudimentally complete already, will open in the future world into the bliss of immediate and sinless fellowship with God. The bearing of these wonderful truths upon the condition and destiny of the chosen people, to which the apostle next comes, though it seems only the practical application of them to his kinsmen according to the flesh, is in some respects the deepest and most difficult part of the whole Epistle, carrying us directly to the eternal springs of grace to the guilty in the sovereign love and inscrutable purposes of God; after which, however, we are brought back to the historical platform of the visible Church, in the calling of the Gentiles, the preservation of a faithful Israelitish remnant amidst the general unbelief and fall of the nation, and the ultimate recovery of all Israel to constitute, with the Gentiles in the latter day, one Catholic Church of God upon earth. The remainder of the Epistle is

devoted to sundry practical topics, winding up with salutations and outpourings of heart delightfully suggestive.

How shall we characterize this wonderful Epistle? Fragmentary answers to this question—or rather some things which may be accepted in lieu of an answer—have once and again forced themselves out in the course of our exposition, where its depths or its heights would not suffer us to be altogether silent. But we attempt not what cannot but fall below the feeling of every penetrating and reverential student. While all Scripture has stamped its impress indelibly on the Christian world, perhaps it is scarcely too much to say, that—apart from the Gospels—for all the *precision* and the *strength* which it possesses, and much of the *spirituality* and the *fire* which characterize it, the faith of Christendom in its best periods has been more indebted to this Epistle than to any other portion of the living oracles. It supplies, to a larger extent than most are aware of, both the bone and the marrow of the evangelical system, as handed down from the beginning, and as received in the living Church of every name. Its texture is so firm, its every vein so full, its very fibres and ligatures so fine and yet strong, that it requires not only to be again and again surveyed as a whole, and mastered in its primary ideas, but to be dissected in detail, and with unwearying patience studied in its minutest features, before we can be said to have done it justice. Not only every sentence teems with thought, but every clause; while in some places every word may be said either to suggest some weighty thought, or to indicate some deep emotion.

No wonder, then, that this Epistle has employed so many pens, critical, theological, experimental. If, half a century ago, the learned and laborious *Fritzsche* could say with truth that the interpreters of it were even then almost innumerable,<sup>1</sup> and all kinds of pens have been employed on it since, it may be thought time now to rest content with what we possess. But the Word of the Lord is not so easily exhausted. Almost every interpreter has his own point of view, his own definite object, his own plan and mode of execution, which must necessarily occasion endless variety in the exhibition of

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Romanos Epist.* tom. i. p. 49.

one and the same truth, and by which alone his labours ought to be judged.

Every reader of the New Testament writes in his own unconstrained style, both of thought and of language. That of our apostle is, in all his Epistles, very marked. Not only does it differ from that of James and Peter, but more notably still from that of John. Between the style of these two great apostles, both in thought and in language, there is very much the same difference as we find in the writings of *Aristotle* and of *Plato*. The cast of the one style of mind is logical, that of the other intuitive. The one reaches its conclusions by a process of reasoning; the other comes at them by contemplation. The one proves them; the other apprehends them, sees them. Not that the one class of minds is destitute of the other faculty—far from it—but that each has its own predominant and characteristic element. In the two apostles we refer to, this is so very marked, that we may safely say that the First Epistle of John could not have been written by the Apostle Paul, nor the Epistle to the Romans by the Apostle John.

Two opposite errors are to be eschewed by the interpreter of this book of the New Testament. If the theological element absorb too much of his attention, he will be in danger of unconsciously forcing its teaching, or at least of substituting for the simplicity and freshness with which it is here given forth, the hardness and dryness of a mere system. But undue jealousy of system, and a morbid determination to make every passage speak for itself, irrespective of its bearings and connexions, leads but to laborious trifling; and, springing as it does from a lurking disbelief of the unity of Scripture, it only tends to aggravate that evil. At the same time, nothing is more difficult than, in such an Exposition, to give the due proportion to each of these elements, the exegetical and the theological. That he has fully succeeded in doing this, the present writer is far from pretending. But if there is one feature of it more than another to which he would venture to claim attention, it is the rigidity with which the exegetical element is made throughout the basis of its doctrinal superstructure, and yet the richness and the definiteness of theo-



logical teaching which a strict exegesis is seen to yield, and which it is possible to divest to a large extent of its modern technicalities. Such as it is, it is offered in this Handbook with unfeigned diffidence, as the fruit of fond, unwearied, lifelong diggings in an exhaustless mine ; and if it yield to those who make use of it but a small portion of what the study of this matchless Epistle has ministered to the writer, he will indeed be richly rewarded.

# THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

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*Title.*—In the most ancient manuscripts of the New Testament the Epistles of Paul are placed by themselves, under the general title of 'Epistles of Paul;' and each Epistle is headed simply by the name of the party addressed. Thus, 'To the Galatians'—'To the Romans.'

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## CHAPTER I. 1-7.—ADDRESS AND SALUTATION.

1 **PAUL**, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle,

Being personally a stranger to those he is about to address, the Epistle opens with a threefold account of the writer :—He is a servant of Jesus Christ; he is a commissioned apostle; and he has been separated to the service of the Gospel.

1. **Paul.** The Hebrew family name *Saul* was changed into the Roman form *Paul* probably at or about the time of his first missionary journey; at least it is there first mentioned (Acts xiii. 9), and only twice after that does the name "Saul" appear—where he himself is relating the never-to-be-forgotten words addressed to him on his way to Damascus: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts xxii. 7, and xxvi. 14, words which the historian, in his own narrative, scrupulously records, chap. ix. 4). Some very improbable conjectures have been indulged in as to the reasons for this change; but since to Gentile ears the Hebrew name would almost spontaneously pass into the smoother Roman form, no further explanation seems necessary.

a **servant of Jesus Christ**—rather, "Christ Jesus," according to the oldest MSS. Both forms, indeed, are used by the apostle, but he seems to have preferred putting "Christ" first, because He was first revealed to him as "the Christ" of the O. T. when "He appeared to him in the way." Five words are used for "servant" in the N. T., all of which convey the idea of *free service* except the one here used, which properly means 'slave' or 'bond-servant.' It is a word of far more frequent occurrence than all the others, and when used to express the relation of Christians to Christ, it means 'one who is *Christ's purchased property*' (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, vii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19),

- 2 separated unto the gospel of God, which he had promised  
 3 afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning  
 his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the  
 4 seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to

and so is *subject to His will and wholly at His disposal.*' The felt honour of such a relation to Christ absorbed in the minds of the earliest Christians every repulsive association with a word signifying *bond-service*, inasmuch that it is employed to express the standing even of the glorified saints to God and the Lamb, while the 'service' which they render in that capacity is expressed by the term which specially denotes *religious service*—"His *servants* shall *serve* Him" (Rev. xxii. 3). Further, just as the prophets of old were officially styled "the servants of Jehovah," so the apostles of Christ style themselves officially "the servants of Christ," in such a sense of *subjection* and *devotion* to Him as they would never have yielded to a mere creature. Even the Baptist deemed himself unworthy to do for his Master the meanest office of a slave—"to loose the latchet of His sandals" (Mark i. 7).

called to be an apostle—even at his first call to be a disciple (Acts xxvi. 16-18, also xxii. 14, 15, ix. 15; and compare 1 Cor. ix. 1, xv. 8): but his apostolic calling was publicly recognised only after events put it beyond all doubt.<sup>1</sup>

separated unto the gospel of God. This "separation" took place at three distinct periods of his life, and the same word is used to express them all: (1) at his birth, when "it pleased God to *separate* him from his mother's womb" (Gal. i. 15)—all the circumstances of it, and the events which succeeded it up to the period of his conversion, being divinely so ordered as to fit him for his life-work; (2) at the time of his conversion, when officially separated, as above; (3) when, in the church at Antioch "the Holy Ghost said, *Separate* me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts xiii. 2). And does not all Church History shew that a similar mysterious "separation" takes place in the case of all who are destined for eminent service in the cause of Christ, in respect of their birth, training, and ultimate calling to their life-work?

2. which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures. The Roman Church was a Gentile one (see on ver. 13); but since most of them had before their conversion been proselytes to the Jewish faith, they are here reminded at the outset that in embracing the Gospel they had adopted *no new religion*, and instead of casting off Moses and the prophets had only yielded themselves to the full import of their testimony to the Coming One (Acts xiii. 32, 33). And since this was his own first discovery when he was on his way to Damascus to stamp it out, no wonder that he dwells on it so much in all his speeches and Epistles, and that he starts with it here.

3. concerning his Son. *Who* He was he reserves till he has told *what* He was, and with such fulness that not until the close of the 4th verse does the actual name come out—"Jesus Christ our Lord" (as may be seen in the Revised Version).

who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh—or 'in respect of His human nature:' compare John i. 14, "The Word was *made flesh*,"

<sup>1</sup> Some prefer to translate here 'a called apostle;' but in 1 Cor. i. 1, the apostle applies the same expression to those he was writing to—"called to be saints," where the proposed translation would be quite unsuitable.

*be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of and chap. ix. 5, "of whom, as concerning *the flesh*, Christ came." Since "the seed of David" was the predicted Messianic line (Isa. ix. 6, xi. 10, lv. 3; Jer. xxiii. 5; Matt. xxii. 42; John vii. 42), Jesus of Nazareth behaved to come of it if He was to have any just claim to be called "the Son of God." Accordingly this was grandly announced by the angel to His virgin mother (Luke i. 32, 33), while the descent of his legal father of the same line was emphatically expressed to himself by the same angel (Matt. i. 20, "thou son of David," and see Luke i. 27). That the royal city, too, was to be His birthplace, was expressly announced from heaven to the shepherds (Luke ii. 11). This claim, of descent in the predicted line, the apostles were at pains to bring under the notice of their countrymen in their earliest pleadings (Acts ii. 30-32, xiii. 22, 23; and see 2 Tim. ii. 8).

4. <sup>1</sup> *and*<sup>1</sup> declared to be the Son of God with power—or 'powerfully declared.' The word means 'marked off,' 'defined,' evidenced to be the Son of God. It is the same word as in Heb. iv. 7, "He limiteth" or "defineth a certain day."<sup>2</sup>

*Note.*—Observe how warily the word is changed here, in passing from the lower nature of Christ to the higher. He "was *made* (or "born") of the seed of David," but He was not "made (or "born") the Son of God;" He was only "declared to be" this by His resurrection. And such is the uniform style. Thus Isa. ix. 6, "Unto us a *Child is born*; unto us a *Son is given*:" John i. 1, 14, "In the beginning *was* the Word; and the Word *was made* (or "*became*") *flesh*:" Gal. iv. 4, "When the fulness of the time was come, God *sent forth* His Son, *made* (born) of a woman:" Rom. viii. 3, "God *sending* His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh:" compare John iii., "God . . . *gave* His only-begotten Son;" 1 John iv. 9, 10, "God hath *sent* His only-begotten Son." Yes, this Sonship was no *made* relationship—a thing of *time*, or *birth*, or *becoming*; it was an essential, uncreated, eternal filiation. When enshrined in our flesh, it was so eclipsed that twice He was about to be stoned for claiming to be the Son of God (John v. 18, x. 32, 33); it was for owning Himself, when standing before His judges, to be the Son of God, that He was condemned to die the death of a traitor to Heaven (Luke xxii. 70, 71); and nothing short of His being raised from the dead by Him whom He was charged with blaspheming put the justice of His claim to be the "the Son of God" beyond all doubt.

*according to the spirit of holiness*—or 'in respect of His other,' His Divine nature.

Two other interpretations have been put upon this unusual phrase: (1) that it means 'according to the Holy Spirit.' But if the apostle meant this, why did he not say so? Was it not rather to *prevent* his being so understood that he went out of his way, and warily used this peculiar expression? Clearly, there is a designed contrast here between "flesh" and "spirit;" and if "according to the *flesh*" means 'in respect of *one nature* of Christ,' surely, by all the laws of strict interpretation, "according to the *spirit*" must mean 'in respect of *another nature*' of Christ, which the apostle chooses to call "the *spirit*" because he had just called the other nature "the *flesh*." But, as it

<sup>1</sup> The connecting particle "and" has no place in the original, and is omitted in the Revised Version, but it helps the English reader.

<sup>2</sup> It is better to join "with power" to "declared," meaning 'powerfully declared,' than to "the Son of God," meaning Christ's own 'resurrection-power;' as will be seen by consulting 2 Cor. xiii. 4; Eph. i. 18, 19; Col. ii. 12.

5 holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; by whom we  
 have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the  
 6 faith among all nations, for his name; among whom are ye  
 7 also the called of Jesus Christ: to all that be in Rome,

would have been to mislead his readers if he had put "holy" before "spirit," he warily changes his form of expression, and says "according to the spirit of holiness," emphatically to proclaim that, as contrasted with "flesh," His is a *spirit* of absolute, essential holiness. (2) Others explain these words of the two *conditions* of Christ's life—His *earthly* life here, in which His higher nature was obscured, and His *resurrection* life, in which all His glory was revealed. But this makes no proper contrast between "*flesh*" and "*spirit*;" for if "the flesh" denotes His human nature, pure and simple, "the spirit" should denote His other nature, pure and simple, as distinguished from the human.<sup>1</sup>

by the resurrection from the dead—Gr. 'resurrection of the dead' (and so in the R. V.); for in Christ's own resurrection that of all the dead was seen to result. In this light the apostles constantly held it up, and hence it was that the Sadducees—"who say that there is no resurrection"—"were grieved because they preached in Jesus the resurrection of the dead" (as rightly rendered in the R. V.), Acts iv. 2, and see xxiii. 6.

even Jesus Christ our Lord. Here at length we have the name of Him who was all along in view.

5. through whom (as the ordained Channel) we received grace and apostleship—both at the same time, and the one in order to the other.

for the obedience of faith—that is, that men might render to the Gospel the duty of believing it. Faith is set forth here as an act of *obedience*, and the first of all *duties* in those who hear it. So also in many other places, as in 1 John iii. 23, "This is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ;" and John vi. 28, 29; Acts vi. 7; chap. ii. 8 ("who obey not the Gospel"), x. 16; 2 Thess. i. 8; 1 Pet. i. 22.

among all nations, for his name—to spread abroad the savour of that Name which is above every name.

*Note.*—Among the devout in Israel "the name of the LORD" (or "Jehovah")—so frequent in the O. T.—was a household word for all that in the character and procedure of Israel's God which is most precious to the heart. When, therefore, we find the N. T. everywhere applying the same term to Christ quite naturally and in exactly the same sense, what can we conclude but that Christians were taught to regard the Lord Jesus as *the rightful Heir to all that Israel's God was to His people?*

6. among whom are ye also—but only along with others. In the light of Rome's modern claims, our apostle would say, "What! came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?" (1 Cor. xiv. 36; and see Mark x. 42-45). called to be Jesus Christ's—called, not in the mere outward sense in which "many are called but few chosen" (Matt. xx. 16), but *inwardly and efficaciously—as this word is always used by our apostle.* Now comes the Salutation:—

<sup>1</sup> This is the view of some of the ablest interpreters—Melancthon, Beza, Bengel, Olshausen, Alford, Philippi. (Meyer, while admitting that the two *natures* are here contrasted, becomes obscure and weak by confining the word "flesh" too much to the *bodily* part of Christ's human nature.)

beloved of God, called *to be* saints : Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

# CHAPTER I. 8-17.—INTRODUCTION—THEME OF THE EPISTLE.

8 FIRST, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that  
9 your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God  
is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his  
Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in  
10 my prayers ; making request, if by any means now at length  
I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to  
11 come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart  
unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established ;  
12 that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the

7. *Grace*, that word of richest import and sweetest sound to Christian ears, meaning that 'free favour to the unworthy,' whence springs all salvation for the lost (Eph. ii. 10). *and peace*—the first result of this grace in the soul that receives it (chap. v. 1). *from God our Father*—as the primal *Fountain*, and the Lord Jesus Christ—as the ordained *Channel* of both blessings. Observe how here, as throughout the Epistles, the Father and the Son are *conjointly invoked*—the One as the great originating Source, the Other as the Channel of all spiritual blessings.

8. *First, I thank my God . . . that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.* The fact of a Christian church springing up in the metropolis without any apostolic, or even noted, instrumentality, could not but cause lively astonishment and joy to the Christians of other places, to whom the news would quickly spread, through the frequent visits paid to the capital from all the provinces ; nor could it fail to attract the notice of many who were not Christians. The same is said of the faith of the Thessalonian Christians, whose bright walk and missionary zeal compelled general and widespread attention to the change wrought on them, and of course to that which produced it (1 Thess. i. 8-10).

9-12. *For God is my witness, whom I serve* (in the sense of "worship") *with my spirit* (or 'inmost soul') (see Luke i. 47) *in the gospel of his Son*—an unusually strong protestation, prompted, perhaps, by the fact that he was writing from Corinth, where galling insinuations against his sincerity were thrown out, and in view of his intended visit, which he would have to be with unsullied character.

*how unceasingly I make mention of you.* Writing in the same strain to the churches of Corinth, Ephesus, Colossæ, and Thessalonica, who can but marvel at the capaciousness of soul, the absorbing spirituality, the impassioned devotedness to the cause of Christ, and the incessant transactions with Heaven about all that concerned it, which met in this wonderful man ! *always in my prayers making request, if by any means now at length I*

- 13 mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto), that I might have some fruit  
 14 among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise,  
 15 and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to  
 16 preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew

may be prospered by the will of God to come unto you. As to the hindrances, see on ver 13. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift. . . . that is, that I may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. He corrects himself, as it were, shrinking from even the appearance of assumption in the words he had just used:—'Did I say I longed to impart something to *you*? Nay, it will be a mutual giving and getting: the profit and the refreshing will be on both sides.' How different (exclaims Bengel) the apostolic style from that of Papal Rome! His apostolic authority—lost sight of, under the feeling of a common brotherhood with all believers—was only asserted when it was called in question, but then boldly enough (1 Cor. ix. 1; 2 Cor. xi. 5, xii. 2).

13. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (see Acts xix. 21, with xxiii. 11), but was hindered hitherto (see xv. 22)—chiefly by his desire to avoid "building on another's foundation," and rather break fresh ground for himself (chap. xv. 20-25, 28). In fact, it was nearly a *quarter of a century* after his conversion ere his desire was accomplished, and then only as "a prisoner of Jesus Christ." that I might have some fruit in you also, even as in other Gentiles. These words should set at rest the vexed question, whether this was a church chiefly of Jews or of Gentiles. Surely, not chiefly of Jews, else how could the apostle have written so? Nor is the Jewish strain of much of the argument anything against their being chiefly Gentile converts, since most of them probably had been proselytes to Judaism first; and as Rome abounded with Jews, not a few of them doubtless would be won over to the faith of the Gospel.

14-17. I am debtor both to the (cultivated) Greeks, including the Romans, who prided themselves upon their Greek culture, and to the (rude) Barbarians—as all were called who were strangers to Greek culture and Roman civilization (see Acts xxxiii. 2; 1 Cor. xiv. 11). So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel.<sup>1</sup> That it did require some courage to face 'the mistress of the world' with a message which to the Jews was a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, was a feeling which could scarcely fail to arise in a refined and sensitive nature. But the all-subduing sense of the inestimable value and surpassing glory of that message hushed every such feeling. for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Thus naturally and

<sup>1</sup> The words "of Christ," introduced here in the A. V. after Beza, who in this followed Erasmus, are clearly no part of the original text.

17 first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

almost impatiently does the apostle glide into his great theme—THE GOSPEL—which it is, why and for whom it was needed, what it does for those who receive it, and where it leaves those who reject it. Its design is *Salvation* to the lost; it comes to men in a *message* from heaven, fitly called the Gospel or 'Glad Tidings'; needed by all, it is *for all* without distinction; *the power of God lies in it to save* the soul that hears in it the voice of God bringing salvation to itself in the *belief* of it. But here the question arises, What is there in this Gospel to give it such a power to save them that believe it? The answer to this question lies in the next verse:—

17. For therein is revealed the righteousness of God. On the sense in which we understand this great word, "THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD," it depends whether we shall enter into the precious teaching of this Epistle or entirely miss it. (1) It cannot mean the mere *attribute* of righteousness in God (as in chap. iii. 5), for this in no sense depends on the faith of men. (2) It clearly means that righteousness which God will *regard* and *reckon* as such in men. But (3) it cannot mean any righteousness of character Divinely *implanted* or *wrought* in men.<sup>1</sup> The whole argument of the Epistle, especially in chap. iii. iv., is totally inconsistent with this view of the phrase, and makes it quite clear that what is here meant by "the righteousness of God" is 'a righteousness *not our own*, but a righteousness *received by faith*, and *reckoned to us*, in virtue of the work of Christ.' This will open upon us by degrees as we advance in the argument; but meantime the reader should take along with him that complete statement of the whole matter in a single golden sentence which will be found in 2 Cor. v. 21: "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Here, (1) since sinlessness, in the most absolute sense that can be ascribed to a creature-nature, is ascribed to Christ, to be "made sin" cannot mean that He was made personally sinful, either in act or inclination. Nor should it be rendered 'made a sin-offering'; but just as "*made a curse for us*," in Gal. iii. 13, means that Christ was 'held and treated as the accursed one' in our stead, so "*made sin for us, who knew no sin*" can only mean that the Sinless One was 'held and treated as the Sinful One' in our stead. Hence, (2) when the effect of this judicial transference of our guilt to Christ is said to be that "we are made the righteousness of God in Him," the meaning can only be that the righteousness of the Sinless One is *judicially transferred* to us the sinful ones, and so we who believe "are made the righteousness of God in Him," or have, in the judicial eye of God, the very righteousness which He demands and accepts; and thus—

"Our faith receives a righteousness  
That makes the sinner just."

Such will be found the doctrine taught throughout in this great Epistle regarding "the righteousness of God." Now for the *way* in which it becomes ours:—  
by faith unto faith (as rightly rendered in the R. V.)—that is, as it is

<sup>1</sup> This is what the Church of Rome teaches (*Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, "On Justification," vi. 7); what the *Remonstrants* in the Dutch Church held; and what the *Tractarians* in the English Church contend for as the teaching of their own Church.



CHAPTER I. 18-32.—SALVATION NEEDED ALIKE BY ALL,  
AND FIRST, BY THE WHOLE GENTILE WORLD.

18 FOR the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against

"by faith" that it becomes ours, so it is revealed "unto faith," that by faith we may embrace it.<sup>1</sup> as it is written (Hab. ii. 4), But the righteous shall live by faith. This golden principle of Old Testament theology—given here exactly as in the Hebrew, except that there it is "by his faith"—is thrice quoted in the N. T. (in Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38; and here), shewing that the Gospel way of '*Life by faith*' is so far from subverting or disturbing, only takes up and develops the one way of "life" from the beginning, provided for perishing men.

18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Each clause of this weighty statement should be carefully marked. (1) "The wrath of God" is 'His holy displeasure and judicial vengeance against sin.' Such language, however distasteful to some ears, is of frequent occurrence in the N. T. (see Matt. iii. 7; John iii. 36; ch. ii. 5, 8, ix. 22; Eph. ii. 3, v. 6; Col. iii. 6; 1 Thess. i. 10; Heb. iii. 11).

*Note.*—There is a tendency among some to explain away all such language as a mere accommodation from human feelings to the Divine nature; and others, who do not go that length, think it enough to say that it means no more than the undeviating purpose of God that sin and misery shall be inseparable. But "wrath" is a *feeling*, not a *purpose*; and though there can be no such thing as *passion*, in the human sense of that word, in the Divine mind, we must not strip the Divine nature of all that we mean by the word 'feeling.' For what do we mean when we say that "God is love"? Is there no such emotion as *love* in God's essential nature? Those who say, No—holding that all such language must be understood metaphorically, not metaphysically, and that all such ideas are merely regulative, not real, in God—divest the Godhead of all that is fitted to awaken the affection of love in reasonable creatures. Straining after metaphysical accuracy, they dry up the springs of all that the Bible enjoins and the human heart feels to be its own proper emotions towards God. If God neither *loves* any object or any quality, nor is capable of *dislike* or *displeasure* against aught that is opposed to Himself, how can He be capable of approving or disapproving? And if He is not, what of *Personality*, that is worth the name, remains to the Godhead?

is revealed from heaven. How "revealed from heaven"? In the whole

<sup>1</sup> Other interpretations of this clause are unsatisfactory. 'From the faith of the Law to the faith of the Gospel,' 'from the faith of the promising God to the faith of the believing man,' are surely far-fetched interpretations. 'From one degree of faith to another,' or 'from a weaker to a stronger faith,' though adopted by some excellent interpreters, introduces an element foreign to the whole argument of this Epistle, which has nothing to do with degrees of faith, but only with *faith itself*, as the appointed way of receiving "the righteousness of God." Others understand the clause thus: 'As it begins, continues, and ends in faith, it is all of faith.' But this is to slump into one statement what the apostle studiously makes two. Surely, since the Greek words which the A. V. renders "*from faith*," wherever they occur in this Epistle, mean "*by faith*"—and are so rendered in the A. V. itself, and in this same verse—they ought to be so rendered here.

all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the  
 19 truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be  
 known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed  
 20 it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the  
 creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by  
 the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and God-

visible procedure of God in the moral government of the world, in which He "reveals" or palpably displays His holy displeasure against sin, particularly by His making sin its own punishment, as so awfully depicted in the sequel of this chapter. The lofty jealousy of that Eye which is as a flame of fire rests upon every form of iniquity under the whole heaven, to take vengeance on it. The two forms of it which comprehend all the rest are here specified. First, "against all ungodliness" or impiety, meaning all the *irreligiousness* of men—their living, no matter how virtuously, yet without any conscious *reference* to God, and without any proper *feelings* towards Him. Next, against all "unrighteousness of men"—against all their *deviations from moral rectitude*, whether in heart, speech, or behaviour. Now, since no human being can plead guiltless of "all ungodliness" and "all unrighteousness," it follows that every child of Adam, while in his sins, is the object of Heaven's deserved "wrath." Thus all-comprehensive is the apostle's opening statement, embracing Jew and Gentile alike in its dread sweep. From this, however, he now descends to particulars, bringing this twofold charge of guilt, first, against the whole heathen world. This he does under three heads—the *progressive degeneracy, the retributive punishment, and the consummated penal debasement* of the whole heathen world.

(1.) *The progressive degeneracy of the heathen world* (18-23).

18. who hold down the truth in unrighteousness (for this is what the word means) (as in the R. V.).<sup>1</sup> "The truth," as we shall presently see, was sufficiently known to them, but it was 'held down' or 'stified' by their sinful life (compare Prov. xx. 27; Matt. vi. 22, 23; Eph. iv. 17, 18; Tit. i. 15).

19. because that which may be known of God is manifest in them—in the constitution stamped upon man's nature, in which the conviction of a God is deeply rooted. for God hath manifested it unto them. How this manifestation is made is now explained: 20. For the invisible things of him since the creation are clearly seen. There is here an incomparable paradox—*oxymoron* the grammarians call it—a bold, paradoxical play of words—"the *unseeable* things of God are *clearly seen*;" the invisibilities of God become visible to human intelligence.' And this has been all along "since the creation of the world." But how? being understood ('perceived,' 'apprehended') through the things that are made. The apostle does not say that even "the things that are made" will without *reflection* discover God to men: he says exactly the reverse. And thus is to be explained the brutish ignorance of God that reigns among the more debased and unreflecting heathen, the atheistic speculations in modern times of some subtle metaphysicians, and the negation of all Theism on the part of many enthusiastic students of the mere facts and laws of the material universe; while to the calm, unprejudiced exercise of thought upon the *mind* which is seen to reign

<sup>1</sup> Compare the use of the same word in Luke iv. 42, "they would have *stayed* Him" or held Him back; 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7, "ye know what *restraineth*."

21 head; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their  
22 foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be  
23 wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the un-

in every department of "the things that are made," God is brightly beheld. **even his eternal power and Godhead**—rather 'Godhood,' that property of *Divineness* which belongs to Him who called this creation into being. Two things are thus said to be clearly discovered to the reflecting intelligence by the things which are made—*first*, that *there is an Eternal Power*; and, *secondly*, that this is neither a blind physical 'Force' nor a pantheistic 'spirit of nature,' but a living, conscious *Divine Person*, whose outgoing energy is beheld in the external universe. And, what is eminently worthy of notice, the outward creation is here represented, not as the *parent*, but only as the *interpreter*, of our faith in God. This faith has its primary sources within our own breast (ver. 19); but it becomes *an intelligent and articulate conviction* only through what we observe around us (ver. 20). And thus are the inner and outer revelations of God just the complement of each other, making up between them one universal and immovable conviction *that God is*. With this most striking apostolic statement agree the latest conclusions of the most profound speculative students of Theism. **so that they are without excuse**, rather 'that they may be without excuse,' or to take away all pretext that they had not light enough to guide them to the right object of worship.

*Note.*—We must not magnify the supernatural Revelation which God has been pleased to make of Himself through Abraham's family to the human race, at the expense of that elder, and, in itself, lustrous Revelation which He has made to the whole family of man through the medium of their own nature and the creation around them. Without the latter, the former would have been impossible; and those who have not been favoured with the former will be without excuse, if they are deaf to the voice and blind to the glory of the latter.

21. because that, knowing God—in the sense of ver. 10—they glorified him not as God, neither gave they thanks—they neither yielded to Him the *adoration* due to Himself, nor rendered to Him the expression of their *gratitude* for the benefits they received from Him. **but became vain<sup>1</sup> in their reasonings**—their speculations about God. **and their senseless (stupid) heart**—their whole inner man. **was darkened**. How instructively is the downward progress of the human soul here traced! When once darkness is suffered to overspread the mind, an impotent stupidity of all the active powers of the soul is the result; and thus the truth which God left with and in men, instead of having free scope to acquire strength and develop itself, came by degrees to be lost, and the still, small voice of conscience, first disregarded, was next thwarted, and at length systematically disobeyed. Wilful resistance of light has a retributive tendency to blind the moral perceptions and weaken the capacity to apprehend and approve of truth and goodness; and thus is the soul prepared to surrender itself, to an indefinite extent, to error and sin. 22. **Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed ('exchanged') the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image**

<sup>1</sup> The word rendered "became vain" almost always refers to the *idolatrious* tendencies and practices of men (Jer. ii. 5; 2 Kings xvii. 15; Acts xiv. 15).

corruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

- 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies

(unto what was shaped like an image) of **corruptible man**. They not only exchanged *God* for *man*, the *incorruptible* for the *corruptible*, but Him who is the essence and fountain of all that is glorious, for an inanimate *image*, fashioned to the likeness of miserable man. The allusion here is doubtless to the *Greek* worship, and the apostle may have had in his eye those exquisite chisellings of the human form which lay so profusely beneath and around him as he stood on Mars' hill, and "beheld the objects of their worship" (Acts xvii. 29). But, as if that had not been a deep enough degradation of the living God, there was found 'a lower deep' still. **and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things**—referring now to the *Egyptian* and *Oriental* worship. In the face of these plain declarations of the *descent* of man's religious belief from loftier to ever lower and more debasing conceptions of the Supreme Being, there are expositors of this very Epistle who—believing neither in any Fall from primeval innocence, nor in the noble traces of that innocence which lingered even after the fall and were only by degrees obliterated by wilful violence to the dictates of conscience—maintain that man's religious history has been all along a struggle to *rise*, from the lowest forms of nature-worship, suited to the childhood of our race, into that which is more rational and spiritual. Pride of wisdom, as it is a convincing evidence of the want of it, so it makes the attainment of it impossible (ver. 22; and see Matt. xi. 25; 1 Cor. xiii. 18–20). As idolatry, even in its most plausible forms, is the fruit of unworthy views of the Godhead, so its natural effect is to vitiate and debase still further the religious conceptions; nor is there any depth of degradation too low and too revolting for men's ideas of the Godhead to sink to, if only their natural temperament and the circumstances they are placed in be favourable to their unrestrained development. The apostle had Greece and Egypt in his eye when he penned vers. 23–25. But the whole Paganisms of the East at this day attest its accuracy, from the more elaborate idolatry of India and the simpler and more stupid idolatry of China, down to the childish rudiments of nature-worship prevalent among the savage tribes. Alas! Christendom itself furnishes a melancholy illustration of this truth; the constant use of material images in the Church of Rome, and the materialistic and sensuous character of its entire service (to say nothing of the less offensive but stupider service of the Greek Church), debasing the religious ideas of millions of nominal Christians, and lowering the whole character and tone of Christianity as represented within their immense pale.

(2.) *The retributive punishment* (24, 25).

24. Wherefore God gave them up. This Divine abandonment of men is strikingly traced in three successive downward stages, each of which is marked by the use of the same Greek word "*gave* (them) *up*."

*First stage* of Divine abandonment:—**in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonoured among themselves.** 'As they deserted God (says Grotius excellently), God in turn deserted them—not giving them Divine (supernatural) laws, and suffering them to corrupt those which were human; not sending them prophets, and allowing the philosophers to run into absurdities. He let them do what they pleased,

25 between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which 27 is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the

even what was in the last degree vile, that those who had not honoured God might dishonour themselves. *The sense of the dignity and sanctity of the body* (it has been well remarked) we may be said to owe to Revelation. for that they exchange the truth of God for a lie. In the O. T. the idols of the heathen are constantly represented as 'vanity' and 'a lie,' and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator. Professing, and at first probably meaning, to worship the Creator, only *through* or *with the help of* the creatures, they soon came to lose sight of the Creator in the Creature. Yet, under the same flimsy pretext, the Church of Rome does shamelessly the very thing for which the heathen are here condemned, and with light which the heathen never had! who is blessed for ever. Amen. By this doxology the apostle instinctively relieves his mind of the horror which the penning of such things excited within his breast.

*Second stage of Divine abandonment (26, 27):—For this cause God gave them up unto vile (shameless) passions.* The expression is very strong, but not so strong as the monstrousness of the thing intended would have warranted, for even their women—that sex whose priceless jewel and fairest ornament is modesty, and which, when that is once lost, not only becomes more shameless than the other sex, but lives henceforth only to drag the other sex down to its own level. did change, etc. 27. and likewise also the men, leaving, etc. The practices here referred to, though too abundantly attested by classic authors, cannot be described and illustrated from them without trenching on things 'which ought not to be even named among us as becometh saints.' 'At the period when the apostle wrote, unnatural lusts broke out (says *Tholuck*) to the most revolting extent, not at Rome only, but over the whole empire. He who is unacquainted with the historical monuments of that age—especially *Petronius*, *Suetonius*, *Martial*, and *Juvenal*—can scarcely figure to himself the frightfulness of these excesses.' (See also *Grotius*, *Wetstein*, *Fritzsche*.) *Reiche*, indeed, throws doubt upon the apostle's accuracy, alleging that the Christian world has been at various times no better in these respects than the heathen. No doubt passages can be produced from ecclesiastical writers, at different periods, in which charges quite as strong as anything in this chapter are, with too much justice, laid at the door of the Christian Church. (See, for example, one from *Salvian*, in the fifth century, which *Tholuck* quotes.) But besides that the very heathen writers themselves (*Seneca*, for example, *de brev. vit.* c. 16) expressly blame the vicious character of the heathen *deities* for much of the immorality which reigned among the people, whereas all vice is utterly alien to Christianity, the worst vices of humanity have since the glorious Reformation (which was but true Christianity restored, and raised to its legitimate ascendancy) almost disappeared from European society. To return, then, to the state of the heathen world: the disclosures lately made by the disinterment of Herculaneum and Pompeii (Roman towns near Naples, overwhelmed by the terrible eruption of Mount Vesuvius, A.D. 79—first discovered in 1713, and now gradually undergoing

natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly, and

disentombment) are such as too fully bear out and illustrate all that the apostle says or hints on the tremendous abominations of even the most civilised nations of the ancient world. Indeed, it was just the most civilised that were plunged the deepest in the mire of pollution, the barbarians being (as will appear from the *Germania* of *Tacitus*) comparatively virtuous. Observe how, in the retributive judgment of God, vice is here seen consuming and exhausting itself. When the passions, scourged by violent and continued indulgence in *natural* vices, became impotent to yield the craved enjoyment, resort was had to artificial stimulants by the practice of *unnatural* and monstrous vices. How early these were in full career, in the history of the world, the case of Sodom affectingly shews; and because of such abominations, centuries after that, the land of Canaan 'spued out' its old inhabitants. Long before this chapter was penned, the Lesbians and others throughout refined Greece had been luxuriating in such debasements; and as for the Romans, *Tacitus*, speaking of the emperor Tiberius, tells us that new words had then to be coined to express the newly invented stimulants to jaded passions. No wonder that, thus sick and dying as was this poor Humanity of ours under the highest earthly culture, its many-voiced cry for the balm in Gilead and the Physician there—"Come over and help us"—pierced the hearts of the missionaries of the Cross, and made them "not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ!"

*Note.*—The great truth, so terribly exhibited here—that 'moral corruption invariably follows religious debasement'—is worth pausing upon for a moment. One is apt to think that the grossness of Pagan idolatry here described and seen in the revolting character and frightful extent of the immoralities which it fostered and even consecrated, if it has not passed away, has much abated in the progress of centuries, and the gradual advancement of society. But so strikingly is it still to be seen, in all its essential features in the East at this day, that missionaries have frequently been accused by the natives of having forged the whole of the latter part of this chapter, as they could not believe that so accurate a description of themselves could have been written eighteen centuries ago. The kingdoms of Israel and Judah furnish a striking illustration of the inseparable connection between religion and morals. As the great sin of the kingdom of *Israel* lay in corrupting and debasing the worship of Jehovah, so the sins with which they were charged were mostly of the grosser kind—intemperance and sensuality: *Judah*, on the other hand, remaining faithful to the pure worship, were for a long time charged mostly with formality and hypocrisy; and only as they fell into the idolatries of the heathen around them did they sink into their vices. And may not a like distinction be observed between the two great divisions of Christendom—Papal and Protestant? To test this, we must not look to Popery as surrounded with, and more or less influenced by, the presence and power of Protestantism; nor to Protestantism under every sort of disadvantage, internal and external. But look at Romanism where it has unrestrained liberty to develop its true character, and see whether impurity does not there taint society to its core, pervading alike the highest and the lowest classes; and then look at Protestantism where it enjoys the same advantages, and see whether it be not marked by a comparatively high standard of social virtue.

receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

- 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those  
29 things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,  
30 backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters,

and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due—alluding to the many physical and moral ways in which, under the righteous government of God, vice was made self-avenging.

*Third and lowest stage of Divine abandonment:—The consummated penal debasement of the heathen world (28–32).—28. And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge* (for the sense of the word “knowledge” here, see on ch. iii. 20), *God gave them over to a reprobate mind.* The word signifies first, ‘disapproved’ on trial (as metals when they are assayed and found worthless); and next, as the result of this, ‘rejected,’ ‘cast away.’ *to do those things which are not fitting; 29. being filled with<sup>1</sup> all unrighteousness, etc.* On comparing this the longest list with the other lists of vices which occur in the Epistles of our apostle (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Gal. v. 19–21; 1 Tim. i. 9, 10; 2 Tim. iii. 2–4), it will be evident to the Greek reader that the *order* in which they are placed follows associations sometimes of *sound* and sometimes of *sense*. Not without reason, therefore, does Fritzsche recommend the student not to spend his time and ingenuity in arranging into distinct classes words whose meaning, and vices whose characteristics, differ only by a shade from each other. A word or two in explanation of the sense of some of the terms will suffice here. “Unrighteousness,” then, as the first word, is a designedly general word. *wickedness*<sup>2</sup>—perhaps ‘villany’ here; *covetousness*—which the N. T. invariably classes with some of the worst vices, and the O. T. too (Jer. xxii. 17; Hab. ii. 9, with following verses; Mark vii. 22; Eph. v. 3; Col. iii. 5; 2 Pet. ii. 3), and pointing probably to outrageous manifestations of it: *full of envy, murder.* The alliteration here of the two Greek words (*phthonon, phonon*) shews that the sound of the one word suggested the other. *strife, deceit, malignity* (‘rancour,’ ‘ill-nature’). *30. whisperers,<sup>3</sup> backbiters, haters of God.* The classical sense of the not very common word here used is ‘God-hated,’ and so it is rendered in the R. V. in the sense of “abhorred of the Lord” (Prov. xxii. 14), as detestable in character (Ps. lxxiii. 20). But the active sense of the word, adopted in the A. V., though of doubtful classical authority, seems to have been, by a Christian instinct, adopted by the Greek interpreters as more likely to be the apostle’s meaning; and certainly it suits the context,

<sup>1</sup> It has been remarked that the use of the Greek *dative* here (instead of the usual *genitive* after verbs of “filling”) may be designed to convey the idea of *engrossment* rather than mere *fulness*. (See 2 Cor. vii. 4, for the same usage of the word.)

<sup>2</sup> The A. V. inserts the word “fornication” before this one; but it has no right to be here at all. The best authorities exclude it; so do all critical editors; in fact, after the revelations of vers. 26, 27, it is quite out of place. Probably the next word, from its being so like (in Greek) to this one, suggested it first; and when once there, it might seem natural that it should be there.

<sup>3</sup> This word, which the A. V. places last in ver. 29, should begin ver. 30; as the form of the original shews that a new construction of the following words begins here.

- 31 inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection,  
 32 implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

whose object is to set forth, by a series of examples, the evil principles, feelings, and practices which reigned in the heathen world. (Compare the Greek of 2 Tim. iii. 4, 'pleasure-lovers rather than God-lovers.') **insolent, haughty, etc.** 31. **without understanding, covenant breakers**—another alliteration (*asunetous, asunthetous*, see on ver. 29), **without natural affection, unmerciful.**<sup>1</sup> 32. **who knowing** ('well knowing') the ordinance of God—the stern law of Divine procedure, to which every man's conscience bears witness, **that they who practise such things are worthy of death**—"death" in its widest known sense, namely 'the uttermost of Divine vengeance against sin.' What that is will be variously conceived, of course, according to the light enjoyed. The mythic representations of *Tartarus* sufficiently shew how the heathen conscience in classic lands pictured to itself the horrors of this future "death." **not only do the same**—which under the pressure of temptation and in the heat of passion they might do, even while abhorring it and abhorring themselves for doing it, **but also have pleasure along with them that practise it.** The word conveys more than mere "consent" (as in R. V.)—a feeling of positive approving satisfaction in a person or thing (so in Acts viii. 1). The charge here brought against the heathen world is, that they deliberately set their seal to such actions by encouraging and applauding the doing of them in others. This is the climax of the apostle's charges against the heathen; and certainly, if the things themselves are as black as possible, this settled and unblushing satisfaction at the practice of them on the part of others—apart from all the blinding effects of present passion—must be regarded as the last and lowest stage of human depravity. 'The innate principle of self-love (says *South*, in a sermon on the last verse of this chapter) very easily and often blinds a man as to any impartial reflection upon himself, yet for the most part leaves his eyes open enough to judge truly of the same thing *in his neighbour*, and to hate that *in others* which he allows and cherishes *in himself*. And, therefore, when it shall come to this, that he approves, embraces, and delights in sin as he observes it even in the person and practice of *other men*, this shews that the man is wholly transformed from the creature that God first made him; nay, that he has consumed those poor remainders of good that the sin of Adam left him; that he has worn off the very remote dispositions and possibilities to virtue; and, in a word, has turned grace first, and afterwards nature itself, out of doors.' Yet this knowledge can never be wholly extinguished in the breast of man. So long as reason remains to them, there is a still, small voice in the worst of men, protesting, in the name of the Power that implanted it, "that they which do such things are worthy of death."

<sup>1</sup> Before "unmerciful" the A. V. inserts the word "implacable." But the evidence against it is decisive, and it has no doubt come in from 2 Tim. iii. 2, where both words are found together.



## CHAPTER II. 1-29.—THE JEW UNDER CONDEMNATION NO LESS THAN THE GENTILE.

1 THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same  
2 things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.  
3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the  
4 judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing  
5 that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the

From those *without*, the apostle now turns to those *within*, the pale of Revealed Religion—the self-righteous Jews, who looked down upon the uncovenanted heathen as beyond the pale of God's mercies—deeming themselves, as the chosen people, secure, however inconsistent their life might be. Alas! what multitudes wrap themselves up in like fatal confidence who occupy the corresponding position in the Christian Church.

1. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man. The apostle, it will be observed, addressing himself now to a new party, changes the form of address from the third person plural ("they"), when speaking of the Gentiles, to the second person singular ("thou")—the Jew—and supposed to be present, as one of the same nation, whom the writer daily met. whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another (Gr. 'the other,' the Gentile party), thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise<sup>1</sup> the same things. In penning these words the apostle doubtless had in his eye our Lord's precept, Matt. vii. 1-3. 2. Now we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practise such things—whether Jews or Gentiles. 3. And thinkest ('reckonest') thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? (Compare Matt. iii. 9.) 4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness . . . not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth (that is, 'is designed,' and 'is adapted, to lead') thee to repentance (see 2 Pet. iii. 9). 5. But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath in the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. The awful idea here expressed is, that the sinner is amassing, like

<sup>1</sup> Though the two Greek words "to do" and "to work" are sometimes used indiscriminately—as in John iii. 20, 21—the strict meaning of the former word is simply to "do" an action, without any reference to the continuance of it; whereas the latter word properly denotes a *course of conduct*, and is so used in ch. i. 32, and in this and the two following verses.

6 righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man  
7 according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance  
in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality,  
8 eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not  
obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and  
9 wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that  
10 doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but  
glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good,  
11 to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no  
respect of persons with God.

hoarded treasure, an ever-accumulating stock of Divine wrath, to burst upon him in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. And of whom is this said? Not of monstrous sinners, but of those who boasted of their purity of faith and life. 6. **who will render to every man according to his works.** This great truth (taken from Prov. xxiv. 12, as in the LXX.), which is the key to the whole reasoning of this chapter, is in the next four verses applied to the two classes into which all mankind will at the great day be found to have ranged themselves, shewing that the final judgment will turn upon *character* alone.

*Note.*—What is here said of God, as the Sovereign Judge of men, Christ says He will Himself execute “in that day” (Matt. xvi. 27; Rev. xxii. 12); but it will be as the Father’s Delegate, appointed expressly “because He is the Son of man”—one in nature with the judged (John v. 27)—yet not therefore an inferior. For who could “judge every one” and “render to every one according to His works,” that was not Himself possessed of a knowledge, a wisdom, an impartiality, a righteousness absolutely Divine? Conscious therefore of this, Jesus could say of Himself, “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father who sent Him” (John v. 22, 23).

7. **to them that by patience in well-doing (or ‘perseverance’ in it) seek for glory and honour and immortality** (Gr. ‘incorruption’), **eternal life.** The *enduring* character of personal religion is the surest test of its reality. Whatever fails to stand this test proves itself to have had no *root* from the first (compare Luke viii. 13, 14; Matt. xxv. 3 with 8–12; 1 John ii. 19). 8–10. **but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey** (the word means ‘refuse to obey’) **the truth**—pointing to the acrimony with which his own Gospel message had been resisted by his own countrymen from first to last (see Acts ix. 29, xiii. 45, 46, xiv. 2, 19, xvii. 5, 13, xviii. 6, xxi. 27, 31, xxii. 22, xxiii. 12), **wrath and indignation,**<sup>1</sup> **tribulation and anguish.** The first of these pairs—“wrath and indignation”—are in the bosom of the sin-avenging God; the next pair, “tribulation and anguish,” are the *effects* of those dreadful affections in the Divine mind on and in the sinner himself: **of the Jew first, and also of the Greek: but glory . . . to the Jew first, and also to the Greek; for there is no respect of persons with God.** As first in reward, if faithful, so also if unfaithful, the Jew will be first in condemnation.

<sup>1</sup> Such appears to be the original order of these words.

12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law  
 13 shall be judged by the law; for not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall  
 14 be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these,  
 15 having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean-  
 16 while accusing or else excusing one another; in the day

*Note* here how differently the future existence of the wicked is expressed from that of believers. In the case of the latter, it is "eternal life." In the case of the wicked, it is "tribulation and anguish." *In no case is it ever called "life;"* but where the future existence of the righteous is so expressed, and the state of the one put against that of the other, the language is studiously changed (as in John v. 28, 29).

But how, might the Jew ask, can Jew and Gentile be judged by the same standard, of *character* alone, when the one has a written Revelation of duty, and the other wants it? The following digression is intended to meet this.

*Digression on the standard of judgment for Jew and Gentile respectively (12-16):*—12. For as many as have sinned without the (written) law shall also perish without the (written) law; and as many as have sinned under the (written) law shall be judged by the (written) law. In this weighty statement two things are to be noted. (1) "As many as have sinned" plainly means 'as many as will at the great day be found in sin.' (2) To "sin without the law" means evidently 'without the advantage of that positive Revelation of duty which the Jews enjoyed.' Hence also to "perish without the law" must mean 'exempt from the charge of rejecting or disregarding it.' Their *character*, on which the judgment will turn, will meet with its appropriate award. Applying this equitable principle to those who enjoy a fuller form of Revelation than even the Jews before Christ possessed, their judgment will of course turn on the use they will be found to have made of their superior opportunities (see Matt. xi. 20-24).<sup>1</sup> 13. for not the hearers of the law . . . but the doers of the law shall be justified. 14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature (by the natural promptings of conscience) the things of the law. The statement is quite a general one, having no reference to those deeper springs of holy obedience which Revelation alone calls into action, and stamps with a character of its own. these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; 15. in that they shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts ('reasonings') one with another accusing or else excusing them. Since even in the heathen breast there is a voice for righteousness, commending or condemning according to the treatment it receives, the final condemnation of the evil-doers will carry its dread echo within themselves. 16. in the day

<sup>1</sup> It will be observed that we have inserted the article before "law" in the translation of this verse, though the Authorised Version follows the Greek in omitting it in the first clause, and the Revised Version in both clauses. On this point see separate note at end of this chapter.

when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

- 17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law,  
 18 and makest thy boast of God, and knowest *his* will,  
 and approvest the things that are more excellent, being  
 19 instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou  
 thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are  
 20 in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes,  
 which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the  
 21 law : thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou  
 not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal,  
 22 dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit  
 adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest  
 23 idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy

when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. This verse neither connects very well with ver. 15, nor with ver. 12, as if all the intervening verses were a parenthesis (which the A. V. makes them). It is better to suppose that having from the outset of the chapter summoned the Jews to the bar of God, and from them passed on to the Gentiles, as there also to appear for judgment—the dread day hovering in his thoughts throughout this long expostulation—he now, without any close connexion with what immediately precedes, winds up with three announcements of what will take place “in that day :”—(1) that God will be Judge Himself; (2) that the judgment will turn, not on the bare *actions*, much less the empty *professions*, but upon “the secrets of men” (perhaps pointing to those depths of envenomed hypocrisy with which he himself had to deal); (3) that the immediate *Agent* in this process of Divine judgment will be “Jesus Christ,” as the Father’s co-equal Delegate, as expressly announced before by Christ Himself (John v. 22, 23, 27; Acts xvii. 31; and see *Note* on ver. 6); (4) that this had been what the apostle ever and everywhere taught in his preaching of the “Gospel” (compare xvi. 25; Gal. i. 8, 9).

*Expostulation with the Jew resumed (17–20) :—*17. But if<sup>1</sup> thou bearest the name of a Jew—and claiming superiority on that ground (compare Rev. ii. 9, iii. 9) . . . approvest the things that are excellent (Gr. ‘more excellent’). The words may equally well mean ‘puttest to the test the things that differ’—the right from the wrong, the true from the false : but as the one is the natural result of the other, the former is probably what is intended. (See the same phrase in Phil. i. 10, in the same ambiguous sense.) *having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth*—not being left, like the heathen, to vague conjecture on Divine things, but favoured with definite and precise information from heaven. 21. *thou therefore that teachest another teachest thou not thyself*. We have here the piercing application of this eloquent succession of appeals. 22. *thou . . . that abhorrest idols*—as the Jews after their captivity certainly did, though bent on them before, *dost thou rob temples*. We wonder not that the A. V. departs from

<sup>1</sup> Beyond doubt this is the true reading. Both words (the one of three, the other of four letters) being pronounced alike, the one would easily be mistaken for the other; and such *Itacisms* (as they are called) were common.

- boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou  
 24 God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the  
 25 Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision  
 verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a  
 breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.  
 26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of  
 the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circum-

the proper meaning of this word, since no allusion to any such act is found in the N. T.; and that it takes the sense that seems nearest to it, "commit sacrilege," which the R. V. puts in the margin. But since in Deut. vii. 24, 25, where they were commanded on entering the promised land, when they "burned the graven images with fire," not to desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto them, nor to bring an abomination into their house, but utterly detest and abhor it, as a cursed thing; and since ver. 24 implies that their conduct brought their religion into disgrace among the heathen, it may be that their covetousness, which was itself idolatry, went the length of so quenching their abhorrence of idols as to tempt them to spoil (or act as resellers of theft from) the heathen temples, when they had a chance, in the countries of their dispersion (compare also ver. 21—"dost thou steal?" and Acts xix. 37). We have not thought it right at least to change the plain meaning of the word. 24. **For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through** ('because of') **you, even as it is written** (Ezek. xxxvi. 20-23: compare 2 Sam. xii. 14; Isa. lii. 5). 25. **For circumcision profiteth.** To be a circumcised Jew, born within the pale of Revealed Religion, overshadowed from infancy by Divine ordinances, and daily familiarized with the most quickening, elevating, and sanctifying truths—this is an advantage not to be over-estimated (ch. iii. 1, 2, ix. 4, 6). **if thou be a doer of the law** (see footnote to ver. 2)—**if thou yield thyself to these gracious influences, and the light that shines around thee be reflected in thy character and walk; but if thou be a breaker of the law—if thy Judaism be all outside, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision—in that case thou art in the sight of God an uncircumcised heathen.** 26. **If therefore the uncircumcision keep the requirements of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?** The general principle here expressed is clear enough, that as circumcision will not protect the unrighteous from the consequences of their bad life, so the want of it will not invalidate the claims of true righteousness. But whether the apostle is here putting a real or only a hypothetical case, is a question of some difficulty, on which critics are not agreed. Those who take the apostle to mean such a keeping of the law as justifies before God—a complete and perfect obedience to the requirements of the moral law—pronounce the case here supposed a purely hypothetical one. But as that impossibility was just as true of Jews as of Gentiles, it seems wide of the mark. To us it appears that it is *reality* in personal religion which the apostle has here in view; and that what he affirms is, that as circumcision—considered as the mere external badge of the true Religion—will not compensate for the want of subjection in heart and life to the law of God, so neither will the absence of circumcision invalidate the standing before God of the man whose heart and life are in conformity with the spirit of His law. But this suggests another question. Is such

cision? and shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

conformity in heart and life to the law of God—or such personal religion as He will recognize—possible without the pale of Revealed Religion? Now, though the apostle probably had no one class of mankind in view while penning this verse, it is scarcely natural to suppose that he was putting a case which he knew could never be realized. What *sort* of case, then, would sufficiently meet his statement? That he was thinking of heathen men who ‘act up to the light of nature,’ as people speak, we cannot think; for this is plainly inconsistent with the apostle’s own teaching. But just as in the days of Melchisedec and Job men were found beyond the pale of the Abrahamic covenant, yet not without a measure of revealed light, so might there occur innumerable cases of heathens—especially after the Babylonish captivity—benefiting so far by the dispersed Jews as to attain, though but in rude outline, to right views of God and of His service, even though not open proselytes to the Jewish Religion. Such cases—without referring to that of *Cornelius* (Acts x.), who, outside the external pale of God’s covenant, had come to the knowledge of the truths contained in it, manifested the grace of the covenant without the seal of it, and exemplified the character and walk of Abraham’s children, though not called by the name of Abraham—such cases seem sufficient to warrant and explain all that the apostle here says, without resorting to the supposition of a purely hypothetical case. (Some, as Godet, suppose the reference to *converted* Gentiles, who though uncircumcised had thus become the true Israel. But this seems unnatural.) 27. **and** (in that case) **shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who with the letter and circumcision—who, in spite of those strong fences, “the letter” of Revelation “and circumcision” the badge of it, art a transgressor of the law—breaking through both of them.** 28, 29. **For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly: neither *is that* circumcision which is outward in the flesh, etc.** So ch. ix. 6, 7. This had been held forth to the Jews from the beginning. Circumcision was never intended to be the sign of a mere external separation of Israel from other nations, but from the first designed to be “a seal” of the covenant of grace (Gen. xvii. 7, 10), as stated in ch. iv. 11; and if there could be any doubt about it, such passages as Deut. x. 16, xxx. 6, Jer. iv. 4, Joel ii. 13, with Isa. lxi. 2, should settle the point.

*Notes.*—1. Amidst all the inequalities of religious opportunity measured out to men, and the mysterious bearing of this upon their character and destiny for eternity, the same great principles of judgment, in a form suited to their respective discipline, will be applied to all, and perfect equity will be seen to reign throughout every stage of the Divine administration. 2. Of the three deep foundations on which all Revealed Religion reposes, we had two in the first chapter of this Epistle—the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics* of Natural Theology (ch. i. 19, 20). Here we have the third—the *Ethics* of Natural Theology. The testimony of these two passages is to the theologian

invaluable, while in the breast of every teachable Christian it awakens such deep echoes as are inexpressibly solemn and precious. 3. High religious professions are a fearful aggravation of the inconsistencies of such as make them; and the instinctive disgust which they beget in those who flatter themselves that because they make no religious profession they cannot at least be charged with hypocrisy—though that affords no excuse for shameless irreligion—is but an echo of the Divine abhorrence of those who “have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.” 4. As no external privileges or badges of discipleship will shield the unholy from the wrath of God, so neither will the want of them shut out from the kingdom of heaven such as have experienced without them that change of heart which the seals of God’s covenant were designed to mark. In the sight of the great Searcher of hearts, the Judge of quick and dead, the renovation of the character in heart and life is all in all. In view of this, it behoves all baptized, sacramental disciples of the Lord Jesus—who “profess that they know God, but in works deny Him”—who, under the guise of friends, are “the enemies of the cross of Christ,” to consider where they are to stand at the great day. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. x. 31).

#### ON THE USE OF THE WORD ‘LAW’ IN THIS EPISTLE.

To account for the use of this word—sometimes with and sometimes without the (Greek) article—the following rule has been laid down—that *with* the article it always means “the written law, the Old Testament, at least;” that “it seems never to be quoted otherwise;” whereas *without* the article it means ‘law’ considered “as a principle, exemplified no doubt chiefly and signally in the Mosaic law, but very much wider than this in its application.”<sup>1</sup> The first part of this rule is but very partially correct; for though in one or two places—such as Matt. v. 17 and Gal. iv. 21—it obviously means the Old Testament Scriptures, yet in the Epistle to the Romans (where the word appears to be used 37 times, according to the received text, and according to the text of the Revised Version 33 times), and in the corresponding Epistle to the Galatians (where it is so used apparently 11 times)—in neither of these great Epistles, with the single exception in Galatians just noted, is it ever used in the general sense of the Old Testament Scriptures, but always in the definite sense of the ‘moral law’—possessed in a written form by the Jews, and by the heathen as written in their hearts. The only question is, whether, or how far, the other part of the rule is correct—that when used without the article it always means ‘law, considered as a principle,’ or ‘the legal principle.’ Now if this is understood of the Divine law exclusively, it expresses a great truth, and one of vital importance. But in this case, do we gain anything by the supposed distinction? For if the law of God (written or unwritten, as Jew and Gentile alike have it) is exclusively in the apostle’s view, and if *obedience* to that law, as a ground of acceptance with God, is what he always means in speaking of it, is ‘the legal principle’ more clearly expressed without the article than with it? So far from that, it seems to us, when expressed in English, only to confuse the reader. Thus in Rom. ii. 13 (as in the Revised Version): “For not the hearers of a law are just before God, but the doers of a law shall be justified.” This, no doubt, is a literal rendering of the Greek; but it expresses what we cannot imagine the apostle to have meant. For men are not justified before God by the “doing of a law;” nor is it the use of the indefinite

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Lightfoot, *Galatians*, note on ch. ii. 19.

article that expresses "the legal principle" in this case; it is dependence on our "*doings*" that expresses the legal principle, and therefore the Authorised Version, by departing here from the *form* of the Greek, and using the definite article in both clauses, has only the more clearly expressed what seems plainly to be the apostle's meaning.

How Bishop Lightfoot's rule breaks down in a number of places may be shewn by a single example—Gal. vi. 13, where, though the article is wanting before the word "law," even the Revised Version, which usually follows Bishop Lightfoot's rule, inserts it, thus: "For not even they who receive circumcision do themselves keep the law." But how does Lightfoot paraphrase these words? "They are no rigorous observers of *law* regarded as a principle"! Can anything be more unnatural than this? Manifestly what the apostle means is to make the same charge against his countrymen which in our Epistle he expresses by the question, "Thou who gloriest in the law, through transgression of the law dishonourest thou God?" (Rom. ii. 23).

As to the omission of the article before "law," there are certain cases where no reader of the Greek Testament expects it—for example, where it is governed by another noun which itself wants the article—as in Rom. iii. 20, 28, ix. 32; Gal. ii. 16 (three times), iii. 2, 5, 10. On the other hand, when the governing noun has the article, the governed one has it too—as Rom. ii. 15 ("the work of the law"), xiii. 12; Gal. v. 19. Cases also there are where no Greek rule is involved, but where euphony, or the writer's conception of it, or his love of variety in his mode of arranging his words, may help to explain such a peculiarity in the use of the article as the one which has occasioned this note. And one additional suggestion has occurred to us, namely, that having to do with the unique fact that the same "law" could be spoken of as possessed equally by those who had it in a written form and those who had not—insomuch that he might say of the heathen that they "had no law" (as in the Revised Version of Rom. ii. 14), and that they "had the work of the law written in their hearts" (ver. 15)—it is not impossible that this may have had its own influence in diversifying his use of the word in the way we see.

### CHAPTER III.—THE JEWS SHUT UP BY THEIR OWN SCRIPTURES TO SALVATION BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

1 WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there*  
2 of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that  
3 unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if

*First objection: 1. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?* 'If the final judgment is to turn on character alone, and that may be as good in the Gentile *without* as in the Jew *within* the sacred enclosure of God's covenant, what better are we Jews for all our advantages?' *Answer: 2. Much every way: first of all.* This is said, not to prepare the way for a "second" (for there is no second), but merely as a starting-point. It suited the apostle's purpose to dwell on this particular advantage of the Jew, and the rest could easily be imagined. In ch. ix.



some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of  
 4 God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but  
 every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be  
 justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou  
 5 art judged. But if our unrighteousness commend the  
 righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous  
 6 who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.) God forbid: for  
 7 then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of  
 God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory;

4. 5, however, the advantages of the Jew are dwelt on with more fullness. **that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.** This remarkable expression (which the LXX. use in Num. xxiv. 4, 16; Ps. xii. 6, xviii. 30), denoting 'Divine communications' in general, is transferred to the sacred Scriptures, to express their oracular, divinely authoritative character. In this sense Stephen, in his address before the Sanhedrin, calls them "the living oracles" (Acts vii. 38). Compare Ps. cxix. 103 ("thy words"); and 1 Pet. iv. 11. 3. **For what if some were unbelieving (or 'without faith'); shall their unbelief (or 'unfaithfulness') make of none effect the faithfulness of God?** Compare 2 Tim. ii. 13, "If we believe not, He abideth faithful." The ideas of *faith* and *fidelity* so run into one another here, that it is difficult to represent in English the precise meaning of the original. The 'fidelity of God' to His promises to the chosen people is the apostle's idea. It is the unbelief of the great body of the nation that is pointed at; but as it sufficed for the argument to put the supposition thus gently, the apostle uses the word "some" to soften prejudice. 4. **God forbid (Gr. Be it not)—'Away with such a thought.' Yea, let God be (found) true, but every man (opposed to Him) a liar; as it is written (Ps. li. 4), That thou mightest be justified in thy words, and mightest prevail when thou comest into judgment.** The sense here is that given in the LXX. rather than the Hebrew, but both are one in effect—that we are to vindicate the righteousness of God, at whatever expense to ourselves. In the affecting penitential Psalm here quoted, the Psalmist justifies God's "words" of condemnation upon himself, and clears Him of all injustice, should His severity be arraigned. And this, says the apostle, is how the Divine procedure toward men should ever be met.

*Second objection:* 5. **But if our unrighteousness commendeth the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath? I speak after the manner of men—'At this rate the more faithless we are, so much the more illustrious will the fidelity of God appear; and in that case, for Him to take vengeance on us for our faithlessness, would be to deal unrighteously with us. (In so speaking, as the profane would do, some apology is needed.)' Answer: God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?—'Away with the thought; for that would be to strike down all future judgment to which, in some form, all look instinctively forward.'** 7. **For<sup>1</sup> if the truth of God through my lie abounded unto his glory—**  
<sup>1</sup> If His faithfulness is rendered all the more conspicuous by my want of it,

<sup>1</sup> The reading of the Revised Version here—'But if'—seems to us to be both more feebly supported and less suited to the strain of the argument, than that of the received text and the Authorised Version.

- 8 why yet am I also judged as a sinner? and not *rather* (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say),  
Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.
- 9 What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise:  
for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they
- 10 are all under sin; as it is written,  
There is none righteous, no, not one;
- 11 There is none that understandeth,  
There is none that seeketh after God;
- 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable;

why am I also still judged as a sinner? 8. and why (should we) not (rather say), as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come? whose condemnation is just—an amplification of the same statement:—‘Such reasoning amounts to this—which, indeed, we who preach salvation by free grace are slanderously accused of teaching—that the more evil we do, the more glory will redound to God: a damnable principle.’ Thus the apostle, instead of refuting this principle, thinks it enough to hold it up to execration, as one that shocks the moral sense.

*Note.*—Nothing shews more clearly the true meaning of ‘salvation by grace’ than the charge of ‘immoral tendency’ brought against it. Had it meant salvation conditioned on any good dispositions wrought in us, or works done by us, even through Divine assistance, it is impossible to see how any encouragement to do evil that good may come could have been charged against such teaching. But if his doctrine was, that “righteousness without works” is imputed to the ungodly who believe in Jesus, it is easy to see how a handle might be made of this to make it appear as an encouragement to “sin that grace may abound.” And the undoubted fact that in all time the latter doctrine *has been so charged, and the former never*, abundantly confirms this.

9-20. *The Jews condemned by their own Scriptures.* 9. What then? are we preferred?—in God’s estimation; have we the pre-eminence? Critics differ much whether the original word here is passive or middle. The middle voice—in the sense of ‘Do we excel?’—being without example, it is safer to regard it as passive, in the sense given above, which corresponds pretty nearly to the translation of the A. V., ‘Are we better?’ That this is what the apostle *means*, in whatever form we express it, is almost universally agreed. *no, in no wise.* Their having the oracles of God *taught* them better, but did not *make* them better. *for we before laid to the charge of both Jews (in ch. ii. 1-24) and Greeks (in ch. i. 18-32), that they are all under sin.* Returning to the Jews, he now shews how their own Scriptures condemn them:—both generally (10-13) and particularly (14-18).

10-12. *as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one, etc.* See Ps. xiv. 1-3; Isa. i. 2-6, etc. Though what is depicted in such passages is not human depravity in general, but such outbreaks and manifestations of it as came under the eye of the writers, it is justly adduced here, on the principle that the tree is known by its fruits. This general statement is now followed up by a series of illustrations, drawn from different parts of the body, through which, as organs, the depravity of the human heart finds vent.

- There is none that doeth good, no, not one :
- 13 Their throat *is* an open sepulchre ;  
 With their tongues they have used deceit :  
 The poison of asps *is* under their lips :  
 14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness :  
 15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood ;  
 16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways ;  
 17 And the way of peace have they not known :  
 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.  
 19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith  
 to them who are under the law : that every mouth may be  
 stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.  
 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be  
 justified in his sight : for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

13. Their *throat is an open sepulchre*—like the pestilential breath of an open grave, emitting foul and blasting speech. *with their tongues*—man's distinguishing glory (Ps. xvi. 9, lvii. 8) they have used deceit (Ps. v. 9) ; the *poison of asps is under their lips* (Ps. cxl. 3)—that organ which was made to "give thanks" (Heb. xiii. 11), and "feed many" (Prov. x. 21), is employed to secrete and dart deadly poison. 14. *whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness* (Ps. x. 7, and see Jas. iii. 6, 8-10). 15. *their feet are swift to shed blood* (Prov. i. 16 ; Isa. lix. 7) : instead of running the way of God's commandments (Ps. cxix. 32), the feet are employed to conduct to dark deeds. 16, 17. *destruction and misery are in their ways ; and the way of peace have they not known* (Isa. lix. 7)—they scatter mischief and misery in their path, instead of that "peace" which they should shed upon others. 18. *there is no fear of God before their eyes* (Ps. xxxvi. 1). Thus does human depravity, seething in the heart, find its way, all too naturally, through the several organs of the body into the outward life. Not that all these specific manifestations of evil are to be seen everywhere and in every one. But appear when, where, and how they may, they are simply the outcome of that depravity, the seed-bed of which is the human heart, as our Lord Himself teaches : Mark vii. 20-33, and compare Ps. xix. 12 ; Jer. xvii. 9.

Now comes the application of the foregoing : 19, 20. *Now we know that what things soever the law (the Scripture) saith, it saith ('speaketh') to them who are under the law*—and of course therefore to the Jews, that every mouth (*their* mouth as well as those of the uncircumcised Gentiles whom they looked down upon as unclean) may be stopped (from self-justification), and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God—stand condemned at His bar. *because<sup>1</sup> by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by<sup>2</sup> the law is the knowledge of sin.* The word rendered "knowledge" here means either 'full knowledge' or

<sup>1</sup> The original word does not mean "therefore" (as in the A. V.)—as if this were a general inference from what goes before—but "because," that being the reason why "every mouth" must be stopped, as condemned by a broken law.

<sup>2</sup> The two Greek prepositions here rendered "by" are different, but nothing is gained by attempting to distinguish them in the translation.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;  
 22 even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there  
 23 is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of  
 24 the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace

'acknowledgment.' The latter seems clearly the meaning here. See on ch. vii. 7. It is when the demands of the law are brought home to us that we come not merely to *know* but to *own* ourselves "sinners."

*Note*—before advancing further in the argument—how broad and deep the apostle lays the foundations of his great doctrine of Justification by Free Grace—in the disorder of man's whole nature, the consequent universality of human guilt, the condemnation of the whole world, by reason of the breach of Divine law, and the impossibility of justification before God by obedience to that violated law. Only when these humiliating conclusions are accepted and felt, are we in a condition to appreciate and embrace the Grace of the Gospel, next to be opened up.

21-31. *God's justifying righteousness, and some of its properties—Inferences and objections.*

*The righteousness of God, at once old and new.* 21. But now: We may view this either as a particle of *transition* to a new stage of the argument, or as a particle of *time*, to mark the bright contrast between the dim perception of this truth under the Law and the full manifestation of it "*now*" under the Gospel. But these two ideas, though quite different, are both so very natural, that whichever of them came up first would almost certainly suggest the other. *the righteousness of God* (see on ch. i. 17) *without* ('apart from') *the law*—that righteousness to which our obedience to the law contributes nothing whatever (ver. 28; Gal. ii. 16), *hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets*—being attested by the Old Testament Scriptures themselves. Thus this justifying righteousness is at once *new*, as only now fully disclosed, and *old*, as predicted and foreshadowed in the ancient Scriptures.

*This righteousness is absolutely gratuitous, and for all believers* (22-24). 22. *Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all<sup>1</sup> them that believe.* It is extended "*unto all*," and it *rests* "upon all them that believe," whether Jews or Gentiles. *for there is no difference: 23. for all have sinned.* The tense here used (the aorist or English preterite implies that the thing affirmed is regarded, in respect of the whole human race, as already an accomplished fact, and *fall short of the glory of God* (or 'approval'). Though men differ greatly in the *nature and extent* of their sinfulness, there is absolutely no difference between the best and worst of men, in the *fact* that "all have sinned," and so lie under the wrath of God. 24. *being justified freely*—without anything being done on our part to deserve it (compare 2 Thess. iii. 8, where the same word is rendered "for nought")—*by his grace*—gratuitously, in the

<sup>1</sup> The words "upon all" are omitted in the critical editions and in the Revised Version; but though external evidence is stronger against than for them, we think with Meyer that they were far more likely to be dropped out as superfluous than to be foisted in where they had no place.

25 through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are 26 past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, *I say*, at

sole exercise of His spontaneous love. through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. A vastly important clause this, teaching us that though justification is quite gratuitous, it is not a mere *fiat* of the Divine will, but based on a "Redemption"—that is, 'the payment of a ransom,' in Christ's death. It is true that the word, though properly meaning 'redemption on payment of a ransom,' is used also for redemption or deliverance of any sort, without reference to a ransom-price. But here, and almost universally in the New Testament, it is used, beyond all reasonable doubt, of redemption in the strict sense of the term; since in almost every place it is expressly said to be "through the blood of Christ."

25. whom God set forth to be a propitiation. In the only other place where this word occurs in the New Testament (Heb. ix. 5) it refers to the 'propitiatory' or "mercy-seat" in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish tabernacle; and the LXX. uses the word in this sense. Hence several of the fathers, and after them some modern critics, translate here, 'Whom God hath set forth for a propitiatory' or 'mercy-seat.' But probably the LXX. missed the strict sense of the Hebrew word which they so render; and as Christ is nowhere else so represented, the true sense of the term appears to be given both in the Authorised and the Revised Versions—"a propitiation," or 'propitiatory sacrifice;' and in this sense it is now taken by some of the ablest critics. through faith in his blood. Some excellent expositors, observing that 'faith upon' is the usual phrase in Greek, not "faith in" Christ, would place a comma after "faith," and understand the words as if written thus, 'to be a propitiation, in His blood, through faith;' and this sense is given in the R. V. But the same apostle writes, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26); and again, "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in Christ Jesus" (Eph. i. 15)—where this identical phrase is used. Why, then, should he not have written here, "faith in His blood"? Besides, by breaking up the statement into two clauses, the order of them becomes the reverse of what we should expect in such a case; whereas, if with the Authorised Version we make it one clause, all is natural. to shew ('display') his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime in the forbearance of God. The sense given to this weighty statement in the Authorised Version is a most unhappy one. 'The sins' which are here referred to are not those of the believer before he embraces Christ, but those committed under the ancient economy, before Christ came to "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Hence the apostle, instead of using the common word which signifies "*remission*" studiously uses a very different word, nowhere else employed, signifying 'pretermission' or 'passing by;' and hence also this 'passing by' is ascribed to "the forbearance of God," who is viewed as not so much *remitting* as *bearing with them* until an adequate atonement for them should be made. In thus not imputing them, God *was* righteous; but He was not *seen* to be so: there was no "manifestation of His righteousness" in doing so under the ancient economy. But now that God can "set forth" Christ as a "propitiation through faith in His blood," the righteousness of His

this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the  
27 justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where *is* boasting  
then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but  
28 by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is  
29 justified by faith without the deeds of the law. *Is he* the  
God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes,  
30 of the Gentiles also: seeing *it is* one God, which shall

procedure, in *passing* by the sins of believers before, and in now *remitting* them, is "manifested," declared, brought fully out to the view of the whole world. 26. for the shewing, *I say*, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might be just and (at the same time) the justifier of him which believeth in ('who is of the faith of') Jesus. Glorious paradox! 'just in punishing,' and 'merciful in pardoning,' men can understand; but 'just in justifying' the guilty, startles them. But the propitiation through faith in Christ's blood resolves the paradox, and harmonizes the seemingly discordant elements. For in that "God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin," *justice* has full satisfaction; and in that "we are made the righteousness of God in Him," *mercy* has all her desire.

*Inferences from the doctrine of gratuitous justification by faith (27-30).*

*First inference:* Boasting is only thus excluded (27, 28). 27. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law ('kind of law')—on what principle?—of works? Nay; but by the law ('on the principle') of faith. 28. We conclude therefore that a man is justified by faith without ('apart from') the works of the law. 'It is the unavoidable tendency of dependence upon our own works, less or more, for acceptance with God, to beget a spirit of "boasting." But that God should encourage such a spirit in sinners, by any procedure of His, is incredible. This, therefore, stamps falsehood upon every form of justification by works, whereas the doctrine that—

Our faith *receives* a righteousness  
That makes the sinner just—

manifestly and entirely excludes "boasting;" and this is the best evidence of its truth.'

*Second inference:* This way of salvation, and no other, is adapted alike to Jew and Gentile (29, 30). 29. What! This disjunctive particle, before a question, is an exclamation of astonishment, and though sometimes omitted as superfluous in the Authorised Version, as here, the Revised Version renders it here, and in some other places, disjunctively—"or"—but perhaps not so well. *Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yea, of the Gentiles also.* The way of salvation must be one equally suited to the whole family of fallen man; but the doctrine of justification by faith is the only one that lays the basis of a Universal Religion; this, therefore, is another mark of its truth. 30. seeing<sup>1</sup> it is one God who shall justify the

<sup>1</sup> The Revised Version adopts another reading here—"if so be that," etc. But though much better supported *externally* than the reading of the received text, and the Authorised Version, given above, it yields a sense so unsuited to the argument that we have no hesitation in rejecting it; and all the rather, that the received reading (different from the other only by having two more letters than it, at the beginning) is found nowhere else in the N. T. while the other reading is common enough. "How easily then (as Meyer says) may the received reading, occurring only here in the N. T., and therefore unfamiliar to the copyists, have been exchanged for the familiar one!"

justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through  
31 faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God  
forbid: yea, we establish the law.

**circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith.** The future —“shall justify”—is used here to denote the fixed purpose of God to act on this principle in all time. It has sometimes been thought that it is the justification of the Jew which is here said to be ‘*of faith*,’ as being the born heirs of the promise; while that of the Gentiles, as being previously “strangers to the covenants of promise,” is said to be only “*through faith*,” as admitting them into a new family. But, besides that this is too far-fetched, it seems to be contradicted by Gal. iii. 8, where the same phrase—‘*of faith*’—which is here said to be used of the Jews, is applied to the justification of the Gentiles. With most critics, we regard it as but a varied statement of the same truth, but with a slight shade of difference in the sense; the first expression—‘*of faith*’—denoting the ordained *method* of justification; the second, “*through faith*,” the instrument or channel through which it comes to us. Similar examples of two nearly equivalent statements will be found in ver. 22, and in Gal. iii. 22 (compare 23).

**Objection.**—31. Do we then make void the law through faith? ‘Does this doctrine of justification by faith, then, dissolve the obligation of the law?’ If so, it cannot be of God; but God forbid,—‘away with such a thought, for it does just the reverse,’ nay, we establish the law.

**Note.**—We cannot part with this great chapter without here gathering up, in a few positions, the substance of its precious teaching:—(1) It cannot be too much insisted on, that according to the doctrine of this Epistle throughout, and particularly of the present chapter, one way of a sinner’s justification is taught as well in the Old Testament as in the New—though more dimly, of course, in the twilight of Revelation, and only now in unclouded light. (2) As there is no difference in the *need*, so is there none in the *liberty* is appropriate the provided Salvation. The best need to be saved by faith in Jesus Christ; and the worst need only that. On this common ground all saved sinners meet in the Church below, and will stand for ever. (3) The love of God and His grace to the guilty, apart from the sacrifice of Christ, would yield no solid relief to the convinced and trembling sinner. It is on the atoning sacrifice of Christ as the one propitiatory and all-sufficient sacrifice, which God in unspeakable love hath set forth to the eye of the guilty, that his faith fastens for deliverance from wrath; and though he knows that he is “justified *freely* by God’s *grace*,” it is only because it is “*through the redemption* that is in Christ Jesus” that he is able to find peace and rest even in this. (4) The strictly accurate view of believers under the Old Testament is not that of a company of *pardoned* men, but of men whose sins, *put up with and passed by* in the meantime, awaited a *future expiation* in the fulness of time; or, to express it otherwise, of men pardoned on the *credit* of an atonement which all the sacrifices of their own economy did not yield, and which was only rendered to Justice when, “in the end of the world, Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” (5) It is a fundamental requisite of all true religion, that it tends to humble the sinner and exalt God; and every system which breeds self-righteousness, or cherishes boasting, bears falsehood on its face. (6) The fitness of the Gospel to be a universal religion, beneath which the guilty of every name and degree are invited and warranted to take shelter and repose, is a glorious evidence of its

truth. (7) The glory of God's law, in its eternal and immutable obligations, is then only fully apprehended by the sinner, and then only felt in the depths of his soul, when, believing that "He was made sin for him who knew no sin," he sees himself "made the righteousness of God in Him." Thus we do not make void the law through faith; yea, we establish the law. (8) This chapter, and particularly the latter part of it, which *Olshausen* calls 'the Acropolis of the Christian faith'—is (and here we use the words of *Philippi*) 'the proper seat of the Pauline doctrine of Justification, and the grand proof-passage of the Protestant doctrine of the Imputation of Christ's righteousness and of Justification, not on account of, but through faith alone.' To make good this doctrine, and reseat it in the faith and affection of the Church, was worth all the bloody struggles that it cost our fathers; and it will be the wisdom and safety, the life and vigour of the churches, to "stand fast in this liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and not be again entangled," in the very least degree, "with the yoke of bondage."

#### CHAPTER IV.—THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ILLUSTRATED FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1 WHAT shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before

The apostle has been all along careful to guard his readers against the supposition that he was teaching them any absolutely new doctrine. New, it might indeed be called, in respect of the flood of new light which had been thrown upon it by the work of Christ in the flesh. But it was of the utmost importance to shew that God's way of justifying the ungodly had been from the first the same that it now is; not only that it had been *predicted* and *foreshadowed* under the ancient economy (ch. i. 2, iii. 21), but that it had been *in operation* from the first. This accordingly is what the apostle now proceeds to do. And as *Abraham*, "the father of the faithful," and *David*, the "man after God's own heart," were regarded as the very pillars of the ancient economy (see Matt. i. 1), he first adduces the Scripture testimony regarding the one, and then confirms this by the testimony of the other.

First: *Abraham was justified by faith* (1-5). 1. *What shall we then say*—a favourite phrase of our apostle in argument (see iii. 5, vi. 1, vii. 7, viii. 31, ix. 14): also, "thou wilt say, then" (ix. 19, xi. 19), and, "But some one will say" (1 Cor. xv. 35, compare Jas. ii. 18). *that Abraham, our forefather,*<sup>1</sup> *according to the flesh, hath found?* According to the order of the words in the received text, the question would be, 'What found he according to the flesh?' that is, by all his natural efforts. But if that had been the apostle's meaning, his manner of expressing it is not very natural; whereas, supposing the reference to be to Abraham simply as the ancestral root of the Israelitish family, the question is this simple one, 'How stands it with that great head of our race in the matter of justification?'

2. *For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God.*—'If works were the ground of Abraham's justification, he would have matter for boasting; but as it is perfectly certain that he has

<sup>1</sup> This is evidently the original reading.



3 God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God,  
 4 and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him  
 that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of  
 5 debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that  
 justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.  
 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man,  
 7 unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *saying*,

none in the sight of God, it follows that Abraham could not have been justified by works.' And to this agree the words of Scripture. 3. **For what saith the Scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it (that is, his believing) was counted unto him for righteousness** (Gen. xv. 6). Romish expositors and a class of Protestants make this to mean that God accepted Abraham's act of believing as a substitute for complete obedience. But this is at variance with the whole spirit and letter of the apostle's teaching. Throughout this whole argument, *faith* is set in sharp and emphatic opposition to *works* in the matter of justification, and even in the next two verses. The meaning, therefore, cannot possibly be that the mere act of believing—which is as much a work as any other piece of commanded duty (John vi. 29; 1 John iii. 23)—was counted to Abraham for all obedience. The case of Abraham here adduced (as *Meyer* justly observes) is not that of a man simply trusting or having confidence in God, but of one confiding in a promise which pointed to *Christ*. What makes Abraham the father of all believers is something far more than the subjective state of heart implied in the general state of trust in God: it is the essential oneness of the Object of Abraham's faith with that of all Christians—*implicitly* apprehended and embraced by him, and *explicitly* by them—it is this that makes the faith of Abraham, in the view of our apostle, the grand pattern case of justification by faith. Faith, in his case as in ours, is but the instrument that puts us in possession of the blessing gratuitously bestowed. 'The faith of Abraham,' says *Jowett* justly, 'though not the same with a faith in Christ, was analogous to it: (1) as it was a faith in unseen things (Heb. xi. 17-19); (2) as it was prior to, and independent of, the law (Gal. iii. 17-19); and (3) as it related to the promised seed in whom Christ was dimly seen' (Gal. iii. 8). 4. **Now to him that worketh** (as a servant for wages) **is the reward not reckoned of grace**—as a matter of favour, but of debt—as a thing of right. 5. **But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted** ('reckoned') **for righteousness**. The apostle in this verse expresses himself in language the most naked and emphatic, as if to preclude the possibility of either misapprehending or perverting his meaning. The faith, he says, which is counted for righteousness is the faith of "him who *worketh not*." But as if even this would not make it sufficiently evident that God, in justifying the believer, has no respect to any personal merit of his, he explains further what he means, by adding the words, "but believeth on Him who *justifieth the ungodly*"—those who have no personal merit on which the eye of God, if it required such, could fasten as a recommendation to His favour. *This*, says the apostle, *is the faith which is counted for righteousness*. So much for the case of Abraham.

Second: *David sings of the same gratuitous justification* (6-8). 6. **Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God imputeth** ('reckoneth') **righteousness without** ('apart from') **works**—

Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven,  
And whose sins are covered.

- 8 Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.  
9 *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or  
upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was  
10 reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then  
reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?  
11 Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received  
the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith  
which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the  
father of all them that believe, though they be not circum-  
cised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:  
12 and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the  
circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith  
of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumcised.

whom, though void of all good works, He nevertheless regards and treats as righteous. 7. Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, And whose sins are covered. 8. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute ('reckon') sin. These two first verses of Ps. xxxii. (which are taken *verbatim* from the LXX. and exactly correspond to the Hebrew) speak in express terms only of 'transgression forgiven, sin covered, iniquity not imputed;' but as the negative blessing necessarily includes the positive, the passage is strictly in point. And here we have another proof that the "righteousness" here, and throughout this whole argument, is used in a *strictly judicial* sense, since it is put in opposition to the *imputation of sin*. In any other sense the apostle's argument would be inept.

9-11. Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision only, etc. The import of these three verses may be thus expressed: 'Say not, All the blessedness of which David sings is spoken of the *circumcised*, and is therefore no evidence of God's *general* way of justifying men; for Abraham's justification took place long before he was circumcised, and so could have no dependence upon that rite: nay, the "sign of circumcision" was given to Abraham as "a seal" (or token) of the (justifying) righteousness which he had *before* he was circumcised; in order that he might stand forth to every age as the *parent believer*—the model-man of justification by faith—after whose type, as the first public example of it, all were to be moulded, whether Jew or Gentile, who should hereafter believe to life everlasting.'

12. and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the *circumcision only*. Here the same sentiment is expressed, but in a somewhat unexpected form—namely, that Abraham is the father of circumcision to all uncircumcised believers. This cannot refer to the distinctive peculiarities of the circumcised, in which uncircumcised Gentiles could of course have no

<sup>1</sup> In the view here given of circumcision—as but "a seal" of the justified state in which Abraham stood *before* he was circumcised—we may see clearly what the sacraments of the Church were intended to be, namely, the means not of primarily *conferring* grace or saving blessings, but of *confirming* or *sealing* what is already possessed. Instead of creating, they presuppose a gracious state.

- 13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through  
 14 the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none  
 15 effect: because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is,  
 16 *there is* no transgression. Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of  
 17 us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not

share: it simply means that all that was of essential and permanent value in the standing before God of the circumcised—all that circumcision chiefly set its seal on—is shared in by the believing children of Abraham who are strangers to the circumcision of the flesh.

What had just been said of *circumcision* is now, in the next five verses, applied to the *law*. 13. For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world. To understand "the world" in any *local* or *territorial* sense—of the land of Canaan, as a type of heaven, or of the millennial reign over the earth—is surely away from the apostle's purpose. Nor does it seem to meet the case to view it as just a general promise of blessedness. The allusion seems clearly to be to the promise, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In this case Abraham is "the heir of the world" *religiously* rather than locally. *By his Religion he may be said to rule the world.* As the parent of that race from whom the world has received "the lively oracles," of whom it is said that "Salvation is of the Jews," and "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever"—in this sublime sense is Abraham "the heir of the world." Furthermore, since Abraham is "the heir of the world"—all nations being through his Seed, Christ Jesus, "blessed in him"—so the transmission of the true Religion, and all the salvation which the world will ever experience, shall yet be traced back with wonder, gratitude, and joy, to that morning dawn when "the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran" (Acts vii. 2). but through the righteousness of faith—it was not given under Moses, or in virtue of their obedience to the law, but simply in virtue of Abraham's obedience, before the giving of the law. 14. for if they which are of the law be heirs—If the blessing is to be earned by obedience to the law, faith is made void—the whole Divine method is subverted. 15. for the law worketh wrath—has nothing to give to those who break it but condemnation and vengeance: for where no law is, there is no transgression. It is just the law that makes transgression, in the case of those who break it; nor can the one exist without the other. 16. Therefore it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all. We have here a general summary of the foregoing

- 18 as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope,  
 19 that he might become the father of many nations, according  
 to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being  
 not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead,  
 when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the  
 20 deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise  
 of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving  
 21 glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had

reasoning:—‘Thus justification is by *faith*, in order that its purely *gracious* character may be seen, and that all who follow in the steps of Abraham's faith—whether of his natural seed or no—may be assured of the like justification with the parent-believer.’ 17. (as it is written (Gen. xvii. 5), **A father of many nations have I made thee**) before him whom he believed. The construction here is a little difficult; but though critics differ about the grammatical form, the sense is the same in whatever way it is taken:—‘Abraham is the father of us all, even of those who were not in existence in his day, in the eye of that God whom his faith apprehended.’ *even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which are not as though they were.* To give life to the dead, and existence to the non-existent, is the glorious prerogative of Him on whom Abraham's faith reposed. What he was required to believe being above nature, his faith had to fasten upon God's power to surmount physical incapacity, and call into being what did not then exist. But God having made the promise, Abraham believed Him in spite of those obstacles. This is still further illustrated in what follows. 18. **Who in hope believed against hope** (when the case seemed hopeless), to the end that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, **So**—that is, “as the stars of heaven,” Gen. xv. 5—**shall thy seed be.** 19. **And not being weak** (‘weakened’) **in faith, he considered not his own body now dead**—reflected not on, paid no attention to, those physical obstacles, both in himself and in Sarah, which might seem to render the fulfilment hopeless, **when he was about an hundred years old**—he was then ninety-nine—neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: <sup>1</sup> **yea, he staggered** (or ‘wavered’) **not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong** (‘strengthened’—shewed himself strong) **in faith, giving glory to God**—as able to make good His word against all obstacles. 21. **and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.** The glory which Abraham's faith gave to God consisted in this, that, firm in the persuasion of God's ability to fulfil His promise, no difficulties shook him. And in all cases, nothing gives more glory to God than unshaken confidence in His word when all things seem to defy the fulfilment of it. 22. **Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness**:—a final statement of the fact, as if to say, ‘Let all then understand that this was not because of anything meritorious on Abraham's part, but simply because he so *believed*.’

<sup>1</sup> The Revised Version—on rather strong external evidence omitting the word “not”—translate thus: “And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body . . . yea, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not,” etc. But it is difficult to see how the “not” could have got into the text if not genuine, nor does the “but” of ver. 20 agree well save as a contrast to the previous “not.” Even the external evidence for “not” is far from weak.

22 promised he was able also to perform. And therefore it was  
 23 imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written  
 24 for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us  
 also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that  
 25 raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered  
 for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

*The application of this whole argument about Abraham (23-25).* 23. Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him—'These things were not recorded as mere historical facts, but as illustrations for all time of God's method of justification by faith.' 24. but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. The only difference between the two cases is, that our faith rests on the act of God in raising up Jesus our Lord from the dead as an accomplished *fact*, while Abraham's faith reposed on a *promise* that God would raise him up a seed in whom all nations should be blessed. 25. Who was delivered up for ('on account of') our trespasses—that is, in order that He might expiate them by His blood, and was raised for ('on account of') our justification—that is, in order to our being justified. Since the resurrection of Christ was the Divine assurance that He had put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself—but for which men could never have been brought to credit it—our justification is fitly made to repose on that glorious Divine fact.

*Note.*—In closing with this chapter the apostle's argument for justification by faith, one cannot but marvel that it should be thought to mean a change of *character*. For besides that this is to confound it with *Sanctification*, which has its appropriate place in this Epistle, the whole argument of the present chapter—and nearly all its more important clauses, expressions, and words—would in that case be unsuitable, and fitted only to mislead. Beyond all doubt it means exclusively a change upon men's *state or relation to God*; or, in scientific language, it is an *objective*, not a *subjective* change—a change from guilt and condemnation to acquittal and acceptance. And the best evidence that this is the key to the whole argument is, that it opens all the wards of the many-chambered lock through which we are introduced to the riches of this Epistle.

## CHAPTER V.-VIII.—THE FRUITS OF JUSTIFICATION.

### I THEREFORE, being justified by faith, we have peace with God

#### THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE JUSTIFIED (CHAP. V. 1-11).

The first great head of his subject, the *proof* and *illustration* of Justification by Faith, being now concluded, the apostle here enters on the second great division, the *fruits* of Justification. These are of two kinds—those of *standing* and *privilege*. The former of these is the subject of the present section, the latter of the two following chapters, while in the eighth chapter both are resumed and sublimely treated in combination. The standing and privileges of the justified are embraced in four particulars, as follows:—

First: *Peace with God* (1, 2). 1. Being therefore justified by faith, we

2 through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice  
3 in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory

have peace with God<sup>1</sup>—that is, not ‘We have ceased to be in hostility to God,’ but ‘God has ceased to be in *judicial hostility* to us’—is reconciled to us, is at peace with us, through Jesus Christ, as the foregoing argument makes quite plain. Nor is it that peace of *conscience* which springs from reconciliation to God, but the reconciliation itself which is here meant. 2. through whom also we have had our access into this grace wherein we stand. This is not a second blessing resulting from justification, but only a fuller statement of the whole condition of the justified believer. ‘Not only do we owe to our Lord Jesus Christ this first and greatest blessing of a justified state—“peace with God”—but to Him we are indebted even for our “access into this grace” of gratuitous justification, “wherein we stand,” and which is the ground of that peace.’ We must not press the word “access,” or ‘introduction,’ so far as to suppose that it alludes to the usage in Eastern courts of strangers being conducted into the king’s presence by an official Introducer, Jesus Christ acting this part for us with God (as in Eph. ii. 18, iii. 12—the only other places in the New Testament where that word is used). The word signifies access or approach to any object—whether a thing, a state, or a person, though more commonly the last. What is meant here is the permanent “standing” of a justified state, which we owe (says the apostle) to “our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Second : *Exultant hope of the glory of God.* and [we] rejoice<sup>2</sup> in the hope of the glory of God. The word here rendered “rejoice” properly denotes that swell of emotion which leads to loud speaking—either in the way of ‘vaunting’—‘bragging’—without any warrantable ground—or of legitimate ‘exultation’ or ‘triumph.’ This last is the thing here intended. The meaning is, that as our gratuitous justification gives to us who believe *present* peace with God, so it secures our *future* glory, the assured prospect of which begets as triumphant a spirit as if it were a present possession. (See more on “hope,” ver. 4.)

Third : *Triumph in tribulation* (3). 3. And not only so, but we glory

<sup>1</sup> If we are to be guided by external evidence, there can be no doubt that we ought to read here (with the Revised Version), “Let us have peace with God.” But (1) beyond all doubt the design of this whole section is *declaratory*, not *hortatory*—to state, as matter of fact, the blessings resulting to the believer from his justification; and as all the blessings next enumerated are put (as will appear) in the indicative or declaratory form, is it not most unnatural to suppose that the very first one is announced, not by saying, “We have peace with God,” but by saying, “Let us have it”? May we not confidently appeal to every impartial student of the passage whether this *can* be supposed? (2) Those fathers of the Church who are quoted as authorities for the subjunctive or hortatory reading, only shew by their comments upon it how ill they understood what “peace” the apostle is here speaking of, and therefore how ill entitled they are to be heard on the subject. For example, *Chrysostom* says, “*Let us have peace with God*, that is, Let us no longer sin.” And to much the same effect *Origen*. (3) The difference between the two readings lies not even in a single letter, but in the short and the long forms of one and the same letter (*o* short and *o* long)—an interchange notoriously common with the scribes. On these three grounds we have no hesitation in adhering (with some of the most competent judges in such matters) to the received text and Authorized Version in this important clause.

<sup>2</sup> With a consistency which in this case is to be regretted, the Revised Version throws this and the following clause out of the declaratory into the hortatory form—taking the Greek verb “rejoice” as a subjunctive, instead of (as every version and every commentary, so far as we know, does) the contracted form of the indicative mood. Everything here is plainly declaratory.

in tribulations also : knowing that tribulation worketh  
 4 patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope :  
 5 and hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is  
 shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given

in our tribulations also—not, surely, for their own sake, for *as such* they are “not joyous but grievous ;” but *knowing that tribulation worketh patience*. To ‘work’ anything, in the sense of ‘producing’ it, is a favourite Pauline word—used by Peter but once, and by James only twice, but by Paul twenty-one times, eleven of which are in this Epistle. The “patience” which tribulation worketh is the quiet endurance of what we cannot but wish removed, whether it be the withholding of promised good (as ch. viii. 25), or the continued experience of positive ill (as here). There is, indeed, a patience of unrenowned nature which has something noble in it, though in many cases it is the offspring of pride, if not of something lower. Men have been known to endure every form of privation, torture, and death, without a murmur, and without even visible emotion, merely because they deemed it unworthy of them to sink under unavoidable ill. But this proud, stoical hardihood has nothing in common with the *grace* of patience—which is either the meek endurance of ill, because it is of God (Job i. 21, 22, ii. 10), or the calm waiting for promised good till His time to bestow it come (Heb. x. 36) ; in the full persuasion that such trials are divinely appointed, are the needed discipline of God’s children, are but for a definite period, and are not sent without abundant promises of “songs in the night.” If such be the “patience” which “tribulation worketh,” no wonder it is added, 4. and *patience worketh proof*. So the word is rendered in 2 Cor. ii. 9, xiii. 3 ; Phil. ii. 22. It denotes either the *process* of testing, or the *result* of the process, as here—*experimental evidence* that we have “believed through grace.” and *proof*, *hope*—Hope, in the New Testament sense of the term, is not a lower degree of faith or assurance (as many now say, ‘I *hope* for heaven, but am not *sure* of it’), but invariably means ‘the confident expectation of future good.’ It presupposes faith ; and what faith *assures* us will be ours, hope accordingly *expects*. In the nourishment of this hope, the soul’s look *outward* to Christ for the ground of it, and *inward* upon ourselves for evidence of its reality, must act and re-act upon each other. Thus have we hope in two distinct ways, and at two successive stages of the Christian life—*First*, Immediately on believing, along with the sense of “peace with God” (ver. 1) ; *Next*, After the reality of this faith has been ‘proved,’ particularly by the patient endurance of trials sent to test it. We first get it by looking *away from ourselves* to “our Lord Jesus Christ ;” next, by looking *into or upon ourselves* as transformed by that “looking unto Jesus.” In the one case, the mind acts (as they say) *objectively* ; in the other, *subjectively*. The one is (in the language of some divines) the *assurance of faith* ; the other, the *assurance of sense*.

The next six verses, instead of going on to some new fruit of justification, are but one lengthened and noble illustration of the solid character of this “hope of the glory of God.” 5. And *hope putteth not to shame*—as empty hopes always do ; is not such as to disappoint those in whose bosoms it springs up as the proper consequence of perceived justification (see ch. ix. 33, x. 11). *because the love of God*—not our love to God, but God’s love to us, as is clear from ver. 8, and, indeed, from the whole strain of these six verses. *is shed abroad*, literally, ‘poured out ;’ a lively and familiar figure for a ‘rich’ or

6 unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due 7 time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a

'copious communication' (see the same word in Mark ii. 22, of wine; and of the Holy Spirit, in Acts ii. 17, 33, x. 45; Tit. iii. 6). *in our hearts*—which are thus, as it were, bedewed with it, *by the Holy Ghost, which was given unto us*—given either at the great Pentecostal effusion, viewed as the formal donation of the Spirit to the Church of God for all time, or more probably when each of us became Christ's (see John vii. 38, 39, where the one is viewed as involving the other). It should be observed that *here we have the first mention in this Epistle of the Holy Ghost*, whose work in believers is so fully treated in chapter viii. The argument of the apostle is to the following effect: 'That assured hope of glory which the perception of our justification begets will never disappoint us; for how can it, when we feel our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us, drenched in sweet, all-subduing sensations of God's wondrous love to us in Christ Jesus!' This leads the apostle to expatiate on the amazing character of that love. 6. *For while we were yet powerless*—to please or reconcile ourselves to God, *in due season*—"when the fulness of the time was come" (Gal. iv. 4), *Christ died for the ungodly*.<sup>1</sup> Three notable properties of God's love to us in Christ are here specified—answering the questions, For whom? In what circumstances? and When? FIRST, For whom? "Christ (replies the apostle) died for the *ungodly*." In the preceding chapter the apostle, with the view of expressing in the most emphatic and unmistakable form the absolutely gratuitous character of our justification, had said that God "justifieth the *ungodly*" (ch. iv. 5). Here, to convey, in the strongest terms, the absolutely unmerited character of God's love to us in the gift of His Son, He says that "Christ died for the *ungodly*"—for those whose character and state were repugnant to His nature and offensive to the eyes of His glory. The preposition here rendered "for" does not mean 'instead,' or 'in the place of,' but simply 'for the benefit of.' How Christ's death benefits us, therefore, must be determined, not by the use of this word, but by the nature of the case, and the context in each place where the word is used. In the case of Christ's death—which is expressly styled by our Lord Himself (Matt. xx. 28), a "*Ransom*" in the stead of many, and a Propitiatory Sacrifice (ch. iii. 25)—there can be no doubt that the substitutionary character of it is meant to be understood, and consequently, that in the *nature of the thing*, though not in the precise *meaning of the word*, the one preposition involves, in a great many passages (such as 2 Cor. v. 15, 20, 21; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Pet. iii. 18), the idea of the other. Indeed, the best classical writers (as *Euripides*, *Plato*, *Demosthenes*) use the one preposition freely in the sense of the other, wherever the *idea* of both is implied. SECOND, In what circumstances? "When we were powerless" (replies the apostle). But in what sense? Not in the sense of impotence to obey the law of God, according to most critics—that is not the point here—but impotence to do what he says God sent His Son to accomplish, namely, to "justify" us (ver. 9), or "reconcile us to God" (ver. 10). The meaning here, then, of our being "powerless" is, that we were in a state of *passive helplessness* to deliver ourselves out of our perishing condition as sinners. THIRD, When was this done? "In due season" is the reply; when the *necessity* for it was affectingly brought to light

<sup>1</sup> There is some confusion in the readings, with respect to the little word "yet" (twice inserted in the best MSS.—at the beginning of the verse and again before "in due season"). But the sense is not affected.



righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good  
 8 man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth  
 his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ  
 (1 Cor. i. 21), and when the angest *peradventures* for it were all completed  
 (Gal. iv. 4; Heb. i. 2, ix. 26). On the first of these three properties of God's  
 love to us, in the gift of His Son, the apostle now proceeds to enlarge.

7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: (I say 'scarcely') for  
*peradventure* for the good man some one would even dare to die. To  
 explain this of two *qualities*—dying for what is right and good (as Luther does)  
 is most unnatural; and to take the 'righteous' and 'good' man to refer to the  
 same thing—of dying for some worthy character (as Calvin and others do),  
 is flat. The sense given in our A. V. is far the simplest and most natural.  
 In this case, "a righteous man" is one simply of unexceptionable character,  
 while "the good man" (emphatically so called) is one who, besides being  
 unexceptionable, is distinguished for goodness, a benefactor to society. 'I  
 said "*scarcely*," for in behalf of a benefactor to society one does, perhaps,  
 meet with such a case.' This distinction is familiar in classic literature; and  
 as it cannot but have existed in fact among the Jews, there is no need to search  
 for any definite expressions of it in the Old Testament.

Beyond this, then, men's love for men, even in the rarest cases, will not  
 go. Behold, now, the contrast between this and God's love to us in the gift  
 of His Son. 8. But God commendeth—'setteth forth,' 'displayeth' (see  
 the same word in ch. iii. 5, xvi. 1; 2 Cor. iii. 1), his own love towards us  
 in that, while we were—far from being positively "good" or even negatively  
 "righteous," while we were yet (or 'still') sinners—a state which His soul  
 hateth, Christ died for us. This is not exactly how we should have expected  
 the argument to run. 'Men (he had been saying) will hardly die for men,  
 even when "righteous," though for one emphatically "good" one might be  
 found doing so in some rare case; but God commendeth His love to us in  
 that, while we were yet sinners—what? 'He Himself died for us' would  
 seem the natural conclusion of the argument. But as this would hardly have  
 been congruous, he puts it thus, "God commendeth His love to us, in that,  
 while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Who can fail to see what a  
 light this throws upon the Person of Christ? Had the apostle regarded Christ  
 as a mere creature, however exalted—had he held Him to be in no proper  
 sense of the essence of the Godhead—the comparison he has drawn between  
 what men will do for one another and what God has done for us in Christ, is  
 surely a halting one. For thus it would run: 'Hardly will any one die for  
 even the best of men; but God so loved us that an exalted creature died for  
 us.' Now what force is there in this? But if Christ is *so* of the essence of  
 the Godhead as to be God manifest in the flesh, sent of God to give His life  
 a Ransom for many—if He is *so* of the essence of the Godhead, that in all  
 that He was and all that He did God was *in Him* of a truth, then His dying  
 for us was as really a Personal sacrifice on the part of God as the glorious  
 perfection of His nature will permit us to conceive and express. This makes  
 the parallel a strict one, and the contrast sublime. But in fact the death of  
 sinners and enemies, as an act of Self-sacrificing love for others, stands out  
 absolutely unique and alone. It admits of *illustration*, indeed, from the  
 annals of self-sacrifice for country, kindred, friend, among men; but every  
 such comparison is at the same time a contrast, and acts only as a foil to set  
 off the peerless character of the love of God to men in the death of His Son.

9 died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his  
 10 blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if,  
 when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the  
 death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be

Now comes the overpowering contrast, emphatically redoubled. 9. *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him.* 10. *For if, while we were enemies—not in the active sense, as persons ‘cherishing enmity towards God,’ but obviously in the passive sense, as ‘objects of God’s righteous displeasure and dislike, in respect of our sinful character,’ we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled to God, we shall be saved by his life.*

Here let the reader observe that the whole mediatorial work of Christ is divided into two grand stages—the one already completed on earth, the other now in course of completion in heaven. The first of these is called “justification by His blood,” in the one verse, and in the other, “Reconciliation to God by the death of His Son:” the second is called “Salvation from wrath through Him,” in the one verse, and in the other, “Salvation by His life.” What the one of these imports is plain enough; but the other—“Salvation from wrath through Him”—may require a word of explanation. It denotes here the whole work of Christ towards believers, from the moment of justification, when the wrath of God is turned away from them, till the Judge on the great white throne shall discharge that wrath upon them that “obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;” and that work may all be summed up in “keeping them from falling, and presenting them faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy” (Jude 24): thus are they “saved from wrath through Him.” Now the apostle’s argument is, that if the one *has been* already done, much more may we assure ourselves that the other *will be* done. The ground of this argument (*à majore ad minus*) is the irresistible fact that the thing which *has been done* was at once inconceivably *difficult* and *repellent*, whereas what *has to be done* is in all respects the reverse. For our “justification” cost Him “His blood,” but that has been already done; our “reconciliation to God” was the reconciliation of ‘enemies,’ and by the *death* of His Son, yet even this has been gone through and completed; whereas our “salvation from wrath through Him,” as it costs Him no suffering, so it is for friends, whom it is sweet to serve. Thus, the whole statement amounts to this: ‘If that part of the Saviour’s work which cost Him so dear, and which had to be wrought for persons incapable of the least sympathy either with His love or His labours in their behalf—if this is already completed, how much more will He do all that remains to be done, since it has to be done, not by death-agonies any more, but in untroubled “life,” and no longer for enemies, but for friends—from whom, at every stage of it, He receives the grateful response of redeemed and adoring souls!’

*Notes.*—1. Though the justification of believers is sometimes ascribed to the “blood” of Christ (as in ver. 9), and sometimes to His “obedience” (as in ver. 19), or—combining both into one—to His “righteousness” (as in ver. 18); the same thing is everywhere meant—namely, the vicarious mediatorial work of Christ, considered as one whole. It is true that the *expiatory* element of that work lay in His blood—His death. But still, when any one feature of

11 saved by his life: and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

that work is specified, it will always be found that this is owing merely to some point in the argument suggesting the mention of that feature, and not to any intrinsic efficacy towards justification in that, to the exclusion of the other parts of Christ's mediatorial work. Thus, in vers. 9 and 10, the apostle having occasion to dwell on what Christ did for men in the light of an incomparable Self-sacrifice, naturally speaks of His "*blood*" as that which "justifies" us—His "*death*," as "reconciling" us to God. Whereas in vers. 18 and 19, his object being to contrast what Christ has done for us with the effects of Adam's *transgression* in placing his seed in the condition of sinners, he naturally fastens on the obediential character of Christ's work, saying, "even so by the *obedience* of the One shall the many be made righteous." By overlooking this, some German divines of the Reformation-period attached undue importance to the passive sufferings and death of Christ, as constituting the whole meritorious ground of the believer's justification, while others were disposed to assign the same place to His active obedience. And we have in our own day, schools of theology of nearly the same character as these. The true corrective for all such narrow views of the work of Christ is to regard it in its *entireness* as God's gracious provision for our complete recovery out of our fallen condition, and only to dwell, as our apostle does, on its several features or stages, as the exigencies of our argument or discourse may call for it. 2. Gratitude to God for redeeming love, if it could exist without delight in God Himself, would be a selfish and worthless feeling; but when the one rises into the other—the transporting sense of eternal "reconciliation" passing into 'gloriation in God' Himself—then the lower is sanctified and sustained by the higher, and each feeling is perfective of the other.

With one other privilege of the justified the apostle closes this section.

11. and not only so, but we also rejoice ('glory,' 'triumph')<sup>1</sup> in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. The three preceding fruits of justification were all of kindred nature—benefits to ourselves, calling for gratitude; this fourth and last one may be termed a purely disinterested one. Our first feeling towards God, after obtaining peace with Him, is that of clinging gratitude for so costly a salvation; but no sooner have we learned to cry, Abba, Father, under the sweet sense of reconciliation, than 'gloriation' in Himself takes the place of dread, and now He appears to us "altogether lovely!"

12-21. *Comparison and contrast between Adam and Christ in their relation to the human family.*

This profound and most weighty section has occasioned an immense deal of critical and theological discussion, in which every point, every clause, almost every word, has been contested. It will require, therefore, a pretty minute examination; and it may conduce to clearness of apprehension if we state, in the form of a heading, the scope and import of each successive division of it.

But before proceeding to the exposition in detail, the reader should observe the terms employed in this great section to express on the one hand that

<sup>1</sup> Gr. 'rejoicing' or 'boasting'; the construction being broken, as if it were part of one continuous sentence running on from ver. 3, unless we are to supply the auxiliary "*are*," and read "we are exulting," etc.

## 12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and

deed of *Adam* which has involved all his posterity in its penal consequences; and, on the other hand, to express what we receive through *Christ*, the Second Adam. Four different terms are employed to express the one, and three to denote the other. The four terms, used with reference to the Fall, are, First, "The *sin*"—vers. 12, 20, 21; Second, "The *transgression*"—ver. 14; Third, "The *offence*," or rather '*trespass*'—vers. 15 (twice), 16, 18, 20; Fourth, "The *disobedience*"—ver. 19. The first word, "*sin*"—from the verb 'to miss the mark,' and hence, 'to err,' or 'deviate'—is the most general, in Bible usage, and of far the most frequent occurrence; being used nearly two hundred times, and in the LXX. more than double that number. Hence, as the most comprehensive term, it is both the *first* and the *last* used in this section; being selected (in ver. 12) to start the comparison, and again (in ver. 21) to wind it up. The second term, "*transgression*" (literally, 'going over' or 'beyond' the proper point, place, or path), and the third term, '*trespass*'—from the verb 'to fall beside' or 'aside,' and hence 'to deviate'—these scarcely differ at all, as will be seen, in their shades of meaning; and here they are both obviously used for mere variety, to denote that one first 'deflection' or 'deviation' from rectitude in which all mankind have become involved. The fourth and only remaining term, "*disobedience*," needs no explanation—expressing, as it does, clearly enough that feature of Adam's sin in the light of which the *obediential* character of Christ's righteousness is most brightly seen. The three equally expressive terms employed to denote what we owe to Christ are, First, What is here rendered "the free gift," or rather '*the gift of grace*'—vers. 15, 16; Second, What is rendered 'the gift,' but better rendered, '*the free gift*'—vers. 15, 17; and, Third, What is also rendered "the gift"—'*the bestowal*' or '*the boon*'—ver. 16. These words speak for themselves, expressing the absolutely gratuitous character of the whole fruits of redemption by the Second Adam. We are now prepared to take the verses of this section in detail.

First: *Adam's first sin of all mankind, and the procuring cause of their death.* 12. Wherefore, 'Things being so,' as they have been shewn to be in the whole previous argument of this Epistle. To suppose (as most interpreters do) that the reference is merely to what immediately precedes, is not at all natural; for the immediately preceding statements are quite incidental, whereas what follows is primary, fundamental, all-comprehensive—a grand summation of the whole state of our case, viewed as ruined on the one hand in Adam, and on the other as recovered in Christ. *as through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world.* By the word "*sin*" here many good interpreters understand 'the principle of sin,' or, in other words, 'human depravity;' others, 'the commission of sin,' or what is termed 'actual sin.' And certainly the word "*entered*" might seem to suggest something *active*. But what follows shews conclusively that in neither of these senses of the term does the apostle here use it. For when he adds, *and death by sin*, it seems quite plain that he means that sin which was the procuring cause of the death of all mankind; which certainly is neither the sinful principle inherited from Adam nor yet the actual sin of each individual. What, then, can this be but *the first sin*—otherwise called "*the transgression*," "*the trespass*," "*the disobedience*," throughout this section? But how could an act past and done be said to "*enter into the world*"? Not as an *act*, but as a *state* of guilt or criminality, attaching to the whole

death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all

human family—as what follows more fully expresses. and so death passed unto all men—literally, ‘went through,’ or came to attach to the whole human race, for that all sinned—in that one first sin.

*Note.*—The reader will do well to pause here, and after reading the whole verse afresh, to consider how inadequately—we do not say the poor *Pelagian* explanation comes up to the language of it, namely, that Adam’s bad example has infected all his posterity; but even that more respectable and far better supported interpretation of it, that the *corrupt nature* inherited from Adam drags all his posterity into sin. Let it be repeated, that the apostle is speaking only of that sin of which death is the righteous penalty; and consequently, when he adds, “so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned,” he can only mean, ‘for that all are held to have themselves sinned in that first sin.’ But how is this to be understood? Not certainly in the sense of some inexplicable *oneness of personality* (physical or otherwise) in Adam and all his race; for no one’s sin can in any intelligible sense be the personal sin of any but himself. All must be resolved into a Divine arrangement, by which Adam was constituted in such sense the head and representative of his race that his sin and fall were held as theirs, and visited penally accordingly. Should the justice of this be questioned, it may be enough to reply that men do, in point of fact, suffer death and many other evils on account of Adam’s sin—so, at least, all who believe in a Fall at all will admit—and this involves as much difficulty as the imputation of the guilt which procured it. But should the justice of both be disputed, the only consistent refuge will be found in a denial of all moral government of the world. The only satisfactory key to the manifold sufferings, moral impotence, and death of all mankind, will be found in a *moral* connection between Adam and his race. And when we find a corresponding arrangement for the *recovery* of men through a Second Adam—though we shall never be able to solve the mystery of such moral relations—the one will be found to throw such a steady and beautiful light upon the other, that we shall be forced, as we “look into these things,” to exclaim, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”

One little word in this verse has given rise to so much troublesome discussion and diversity of interpretation—the word “*as*” with which the verse starts (“Wherefore, *as* by one man,” etc.)—that it will be necessary to advert to the different views taken of it ere we can fix satisfactorily its precise import here. Is this, then, meant to denote the first member of a comparison? If so, where is the second member? (1) Some see no comparison here at all, and so translate ‘Wherefore (it is) like as by one man,’ etc. But it is fatal to this interpretation, that it makes the sin and death of mankind in Adam to be the apostle’s principal topic in this section; whereas it is here introduced only to illustrate by contrast what we owe to Christ. (2) Others, admitting that the “*as*” of this verse *is* the first member of a comparison, find the second in the sequel of this same verse; while some find it in the word “*so*,” translating “even so” instead of “and so.” But this makes bad Greek. Others find it in the word *and* (“and so death by sin”). But besides that this makes a very weak comparison, it compares the wrong parties—namely, Adam and his posterity—whereas it is Adam and Christ whom this section throughout compares and contrasts. Of other

13 have sinned :—for until the law sin was in the world : but sin 14 is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death

solutions we need only mention that of most interpreters, (3) that the second member of the comparison is to be found in vers. 18, 19 ; each of these verses beginning a resumption of the first member of the comparison, nearly as in ver. 12, and ending with a full and formal completion of it : ‘ Therefore, *as* by the offence of one,’ etc., ‘ *even so* by the righteousness of one,’ etc.—‘ For *as* by one man’s disobedience,’ etc., ‘ *so* by the obedience of one,’ etc.

To us there appears to be no real difference between any of the views which recognise in ver. 12 only the first member of a comparison between Adam and Christ. All admit that the second member of the comparison, regarding Christ, is what the apostle’s mind was full of ; that all that he says in the development and illustration of the first, regarding Adam, is only introduced with the view of enhancing the second ; and that this second, so far from being held in suspense or entirely postponed till the 18th verse, crops out in one form or other from the 15th verse—where, having mentioned Adam, the apostle adds, “ who is the figure of Him that was to come ”—onwards from verse to verse until, at vers. 18 and 19, it culminates in a redoubled statement, which, for clearness and comprehensiveness, leaves nothing to be desired. If, then, we grant on the one hand that the formal summation of the whole statement is reserved to the end, it surely need not be denied, on the other, that the apostle is less careful about the verbal balance of the two members of the comparison than about a vigorous and reiterated expression of his meaning in regard to the two great Heads of the human family.

Having thus disposed of the points which have been raised on this opening verse, the remaining ones need not detain us so long.

Second : *The reign of death from Adam to Moses proves the imputation of sin during all that period ; and consequently the existence of a law, other than that of Moses, of which sin is the breach* (13, 14). 13. For until (the giving of) the law sin was in the world—the same sin as that meant in ver. 12, whose penalty is death, as is obvious from what immediately follows. but sin is not imputed where there is no law (the same statement as in iv. 15, and see 1 John iii. 4). It is surprising that so sagacious an interpreter as Calvin should have followed Luther here (as he himself has been followed by many others) in taking the ‘ imputation ’ of sin here to mean the *sense* or feeling of sin by men themselves. For this, besides putting an unwarranted sense on the word ‘ imputation,’ confuses and obscures the apostle’s statement, which plainly is, that God’s treatment of men, from Adam to Moses, shews them to have been ‘ reckoned ’ sinners, and consequently violators of some Divine law other than that of Moses. The view we have given, as it is the simplest, so it is the only one, as we think, that suits the purposes of the apostle’s argument ; as will appear from what follows. 14. Nevertheless—‘ Yet, though according to this sound principle it might have been supposed that mankind, from Adam to Moses, being under no law expressly and outwardly revealed, could not be held liable to death as breakers of law—even then, death reigned, held unresisted and universal sway, from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam’s transgression.

But who are they ? *Infants* (say some) who, being guiltless of actual sin,

reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many

and yet subject to death, must be sinners in a very different sense from Adam. But why should infants be specially connected with the period "from Adam to Moses," since infants die alike in every period? And if the apostle meant to express here the death of infants, why has he done it so enigmatically? Besides, the death of infants is comprehended in the universal mortality, on account of the first sin, so emphatically expressed in ver. 12: what need, then, to specify it here? and why should we presume it to be meant here, unless the language unmistakably point to it—which it certainly does not? The meaning, then, must be, that 'death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those that had not, like Adam, transgressed against a positive commandment, threatening death to the disobedient.' In this case, the particle "even," instead of specifying one particular class of those who lived "from Adam to Moses" (as the other view supposes), merely explains what it was that made the case of those who died from Adam to Moses worthy of special notice—namely, that 'though unlike Adam, and all since Moses, those who lived between the two periods had no positive threatening of death for transgression, nevertheless, death reigned *even over them*,' who is the figure of him that was to come—the Second Adam. This parenthetical clause is inserted here (as has been properly remarked) on the first mention of the name "Adam" as the *one man* of whom he is speaking, to recall the purpose for which he is treating of him—as the figure of Christ. The point of analogy intended is plainly the *public character* which both sustained, neither of the two being regarded in the Divine procedure towards mankind as mere *individual* men, but both alike as *representative* men. Some take the proper supplement here to be, 'Him [that is] to come,' understanding the apostle to speak from his own time, and to refer to Christ's Second Coming. But this is unnatural, since the whole analogy here contemplated between the Second Adam and the First has been in full development ever since "God exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour," and it will only remain to be consummated at His Second Coming. The simple meaning is, that Adam is a type of Him who was to come after him *in the same public character*, and so to be "the Second Adam."

Third: *The cases of Adam and Christ present points of contrast as well as of resemblance* (15-17). 15. But ('Howbeit') not as the trespass, so also *is* the free gift—"the gift of grace," or 'gracious gift': in other words, 'The two cases present points of contrast as well as resemblance.'

First point of contrast: *If God permitted the sin of the one Head of humanity to blight the many, much more may we rest assured, that through the merit of the other Head the many will be blessed.* For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many. Pity it is that our translators omitted the articles in this verse, as they throw so much light on the precise parties and things contrasted. By 'the many,' in both members of this comparison, is meant the *mass* of mankind, represented respectively by Adam and Christ; and the opposition of these "many" is

be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of

neither to *few* men, nor to *all* men, but to '*the one man*' who represented them respectively. It is of great importance to the right understanding of the whole argument to observe this. By 'the gift of grace,' or 'the free gift,' is meant—as in ver. 17—the glorious gift of *justifying righteousness*. This is expressly distinguished from "the *grace* of God," from which that gift is here said to flow, as the *effect* from the *cause*; and both are said to "abound" towards us in Christ, in what sense will appear in the next two verses. Finally, The "much more," of the one case than the other, does not mean that we get much more of good by Christ than of evil by Adam (for it is not a case of quantity at all), but that we have much more reason to expect—or it is much more agreeable to our ideas of God—that the many should be benefited by the merit of one, than that they should suffer for the sin of one; and if the latter has happened, *much more* may we assure ourselves of the former. It has been observed that by the use of the Greek *dative* (instead of the usual form with the genitive), the causal sin of Adam is conceived of as identified with the agent himself, and invested with a sort of living energy, taking deadly effect on all his race. Perhaps this is to press the grammatical form a little too far; but there can be no doubt that it expresses the very idea intended by the apostle.

Second point of contrast: *The condemnation was for one sin, but the justification covers many offences.* 16. And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift—'the bestowal,' 'the boon.' This is but a varied expression of what was said in the preceding verse, but it is simply to introduce another point of contrast. for the judgment *came* of one unto condemnation. The "of" here denotes the criminal source or procuring cause of the condemnation of the human race to death. but the free gift *came* of many trespasses unto justification. The form of the word here used is not the usual one for "justification" (or that which signifies the state, habit, or quality of him who is "just" or "righteous"), but that which signifies what is "ordained" or "decreed;" the 'sentence pronounced.' Accordingly, its sense here is 'the righteous acquittal' pronounced upon those on whom the 'gift of grace' has been conferred. The expression 'of many trespasses'—evidently suggested by the foregoing one 'of one trespass'—presents the trespasses covered in justification in a peculiar light, as in some sense the procuring cause of the glorious remedy; as if the cry of these countless offences had gone up to heaven, but instead of drawing down vengeance, had wakened the Divine compassions, and given birth to the wondrous provisions of grace in Christ Jesus. The whole statement, then, amounts to this: 'The condemnation by Adam was for *one sin*; but the justification by Christ is an absolution not only from the guilt of that first offence, mysteriously attaching to every individual of the race, but from the *countless offences* into which, as a germ lodged in the bosom of every child of Adam, it unfolds itself in his life.' This is the meaning of what the verse tells us of 'grace *abounding* towards us in the *abundance* of the gift of righteousness.' It is a grace not only rich in its character, but rich in detail; a "righteousness" not only rich in a *complete justification* of the guilty, condemned



17 many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in 18 life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto

sinner, but rich in the *amplitude of the ground* which it covers, leaving no ore sin of any of the justified person uncanceled, but making him, though loaded with the guilt of myriads of offences, "the righteousness of God in Christ."

17. For if by the trespass of the one death reigned through the one; much more shall they who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, *even Jesus Christ*. We have here the two ideas of vers. 15 and 16 sublimely combined into one, as if the subject had grown upon the apostle as he advanced in his comparison of the two cases. Here, for the first time in this section, does he speak of that LIFE which springs out of justification, in contrast with the death which springs from sin and follows condemnation. The proper idea, therefore, of the word "life," here is, 'Right to live'—'Righteous life'—life possessed and enjoyed with the good will and in conformity with the eternal law of "Him that sitteth on the Throne;" life, therefore, in its widest sense—life in the whole man and throughout the whole duration of human existence, the life of blissful and loving relationship to God in soul and body for ever and ever. It is worthy of note, too, that while he says death "reigned over" us through Adam, he does not say Life 'reigns over us' through Christ; lest he should seem to invest this new life with the very attribute of the death—that of fell and malignant tyranny—of which we were the hapless victims. Nor does he say Life reigns *in* us, which would have been a scriptural enough idea; but, which is much more pregnant, "*We shall reign in life.*" While *freedom* and *might* are implied in the figure of 'reigning,' 'life' is represented as the glorious *territory or atmosphere* of that reign. And by recurring to the idea of ver. 16 as to the "many offences" whose complete pardon shews "the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness" the whole statement amounts to this: 'If one man's one offence let loose against us the tyrant power of Death, to hold us as its victims in helpless bondage, "much more," when we stand forth enriched with God's "abounding grace," and in the beauty of a complete absolution from countless offences, shall we expatiate in a life divinely owned and legally secured, "reigning" in exultant freedom and unchallenged might, through that other matchless "One," Jesus Christ!' (On the import of the *future* tense in this last clause, see on ver. 19 and ch. vi. 5.)

Fourth: *To sum up all in one word—To TWO MEN Humanity owes its ruin and its recovery: condemnation to the one, justification to the other; death to the one, life to the other* (18, 19). 18. So then—"The matter standing as we have thus at length shewn." In this way the apostle here explicitly resumes the unfinished comparison of ver. 12, in order to give *formally* the concluding member of it, though this had been done once and again *substantially* in the intermediate verses. *as through one trespass the judgment came* (or simply 'it came') *unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness* (the free gift came, or 'it came') *unto all men to justification of life—each "act" respectively resulted in this.* There is not a

19 justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

little to be said for the sense given to this verse in our A.V.—referring the comparison or contrast to the two *persons*, Adam and Christ; and at one time we thought it the true sense. But beyond doubt, the only natural sense of the Greek is what we have now given (as in the R.V.) In this case, the whole righteousness wrought out mediatorially by Christ—His “obedience unto death”—is gathered up into “one” whole “act of righteousness,” with the view of standing more directly over against the “one trespass” of Adam. Finally, the lofty expression “justification of life” is just a vivid combination of two distinct ideas already expatiated upon, and means ‘justification entitling to, and issuing in, the rightful possession and enjoyment of life.’ 19. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners—‘constituted’ or ‘held to be’ sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous. On this great verse observe, *first*, that by the “obedience” of Christ here is plainly meant more than what divines call His *active* obedience, as distinguished from His sufferings and death; it is the entire work of Christ in its *obediential* character. Our Lord Himself represents even His death as His great act of obedience to the Father: “This commandment (*i.e.* to lay down and resume His life) have I received of my Father” (John x. 18). *Second*, The significant word twice here rendered “made,” does not signify to ‘work a change upon’ a person or thing, but to ‘establish,’ ‘constitute,’ or ‘ordain,’ as will be seen from all the places where it is used. Here, accordingly, it is intended to express that *judicial act* which holds men, in virtue of their connection with Adam, as sinners; and in connection with Christ, as righteous. *Third*, The change of *tense* from the past to the future—‘as through Adam we *were* made sinners, so through Christ we *shall be* made righteous’—delightfully expresses the *enduring* character of the act, and of the economy to which such acts belong, in contrast with the ruin, for ever past, of believers in Adam. (See on ch. vi. 5.) *Fourth*, The “all men” of ver. 18, and the “many” of ver. 19, are the same party, though under a slightly different aspect. In the latter case the contrast is between the one representative (Adam—Christ) and the *many* whom he represented; in the former case, it is between the one *head* (Adam—Christ) and the *race*, affected for death and life respectively by the actings of that one. Only in this latter case (as *Meyer* here clearly recognises) it is the redeemed family of man that is alone in view; it is *Humanity* as actually lost, but also as actually saved—as ruined and recovered. Such as refuse to fall in with the high purpose of God to constitute His Son a ‘second Adam,’ the Head of a new race—and so, as impenitent and unbelieving, finally perish—have no place in this section of the Epistle, whose sole object is to shew how God repairs in the Second Adam the evil done by the First. Thus the doctrine of *universal restoration* has no place here. Thus, too, the forced interpretation (of a great many expositors) by which the ‘justification of all’ is made to mean a justification merely in *possibility* and *offer* to all, and the ‘justification of the many’ to mean the *actual* justification of as many as believe, is completely avoided. And thus, finally, the harshness of comparing a *whole* fallen family with a recovered *part* is got rid of. However true it be in *fact* that part of mankind are not saved, this is not the *aspect* in which the subject

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.

But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:  
21 that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace  
is here presented. It is *totals* that are compared and contrasted; and it is the *same total* in two successive conditions—namely, *the human race* as ruined in Adam and recovered in Christ.

Fifth: *But if the whole purpose of God towards men centres in Adam and Christ, where does the Law come in, and what was its use? It was given to reveal more fully the Ruin that came by the one and the Recovery brought in by the other* (20, 21). 20. *The law entered*—‘entered incidentally’ or ‘parenthetically.’ It is important to preserve this shade of meaning, which the compound word certainly conveys, and which—though not always intended to be pressed—was here plainly designed to be conveyed. *Bengel*, with his usual acuteness, notices that this compound verb—‘the law entered *subordinately*’—is designed as the antithesis to the simple one, “sin *entered*,” in ver. 12; adding, ‘Sin is older than the law.’ In Gal. ii. 4 the same word is by our translators properly rendered, “came in privily.” The meaning, then, here is, that *the promulgation of the law of Sinai was no primary or essential feature of the Divine plan*, but it was “added” (Gal. iii. 19) for a subordinate purpose—the more fully to reveal the evil occasioned by Adam, and the need and glory of the remedy by Christ. *that the trespass*—meaning, as throughout all this section, ‘the one first transgression of Adam,’ *might abound*—literally, ‘might be more,’ or ‘be multiplied.’ The immediate reference is not to the *recognition and sense* of sin by men themselves, although that is the natural result. God intended, says the apostle, by the giving of the law to make it appear that the multiplied breaches of it which would certainly ensue were but the varied activity of that first transgression, and so to shew what a fearful thing that first sin was, as not only “entering into the world,” but becoming the active principle and constitutive character of the whole race. It is as if the apostle had said, ‘All our multitudinous breaches of the law are nothing but *that one first offence*, lodged mysteriously in the bosom of every child of Adam as an *offending principle*, and *multiplying itself* into myriads of particular offences in the life of each.’ What was one *act* of disobedience in the head has been converted into a vital and virulent *principle* of disobedience in all the members of the human family, whose every act of wilful rebellion proclaims itself the child of the original transgression.

But where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly. The comparison here is between the multiplication of one offence into countless transgressions, and such an overflow of grace as more than meets that appalling case. 21. *that as sin reigned*. Observe here the marked change in the term employed to express the great original transgression. It is no longer ‘trespass’—that view of the matter has been sufficiently illustrated—but, as better befitted this comprehensive and sublime summation of the whole matter, the great general term *SIN*, in death—not “unto death” as our A. V. after Beza. The word with which this section opened is here resumed. The true sense is clear on the face of the words—‘that as Sin reached its uttermost end “in death,” and thus revelled (so to speak) in the complete destruction of its victims,’ *even so might grace reign*. In ver. 14 we had the reign of *death* of the fallen in Adam, and in ver. 17 the reign in *life* of the justified in Christ. Here we have the reign of the mighty *causes* of both *these*—of *SIN*, which clothes *Death* as a Sovereign with venomous *power*

reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

(1 Cor. xv. 56) and with awful *authority* (ch. vi. 23), and of GRACE, the grace which originated the scheme of salvation, the grace which "sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," the grace which "made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin," the grace which "makes us to be the righteousness of God in Him;" so that "we who receive the *abundance of grace* and of the gift of righteousness do reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." **Through righteousness**—not *ours* certainly, nor yet exactly 'justification,' but rather, 'the justifying righteousness of Christ,' the same which in ver. 19 is called His "obedience," meaning His whole mediatorial work in the flesh. This is here represented as the *righteous medium* through which Grace reaches its objects and attains all its ends, the stable throne from which Grace as a Sovereign dispenses its saving benefits to as many as are brought under its benign sway. **unto eternal life**—which is Salvation in its highest form and fullest development for ever, by **Jesus Christ our Lord**. Thus, on that "Name which is above every name" the echoes of this hymn to the glory of "Grace" die away, and "Jesus is left alone."

The profound and inestimable teaching of this golden section of our Epistle has been somewhat obscured, we fear, by the unusual quantity of nice verbal criticism which it seemed to require, and the necessity of distinguishing some theological ideas in it which are apt to be confounded. It may not be superfluous, therefore, to bring it out more fully by the following notes.

*Notes.*—1. If this section do not teach that the whole race of Adam, standing in him as their federal head, 'sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression,' we may despair of any intelligible exposition of it. The apostle, after saying that Adam's sin introduced death into the world, does not say "and so death passed upon all men, for that" *Adam* "sinned," but "for that *all* sinned." Thus, according to the teaching of the apostle, 'the death of all is for the sin of all;' and as this cannot mean the personal sins of each individual, but some sin with which unconscious infants are charged equally with adults, it can mean nothing but the one 'first transgression' of their common head, regarded as *the sin of each* of his race, and punished, as such, with death. It is vain to start back from this imputation to all of the guilt of Adam's first sin, as wearing the appearance of *injustice*. For not only are all other theories liable to the same objection in some other form—besides being inconsistent with the text—but the actual *facts of human nature*, which none dispute and which cannot be explained away, involve essentially the same difficulties as the great *principle* on which the apostle here explains them. Whereas, if we admit this principle, on the authority of our apostle, a flood of light is at once thrown upon certain features of the Divine procedure, and certain portions of the Divine oracles, which otherwise are involved in much darkness; and if the principle itself seem hard to digest, it is not harder than the *existence of evil*, which as a fact admits of no dispute, but as a feature in the Divine administration admits of no explanation in the present state. 2. What is commonly called *original sin*—or that depraved tendency to evil with which every child of Adam comes into the world—is not formally treated of in this section; and even in the seventh chapter it is rather its *nature and operations* than its *connection with the first sin* which is handled. But indirectly, this section bears indubitable testimony to it, representing the one original offence—unlike every other—as

having an *enduring vitality* in the bosom of every child of Adam, as a principle of disobedience, whose origin and virulence have gotten it the familiar name of 'original sin.' 3. In what sense is the word "*death*" used throughout this section? Not certainly as mere *temporal* death, as shallow commentators affirm. For since Christ came to undo what Adam did—and that is all comprehended in the word "*death*"—it would hence follow that Christ has merely dissolved the sentence by which soul and body are parted in death; in other words, merely procured the resurrection of the body. But the teaching of the New Testament throughout regarding the salvation of Christ reaches far beyond the resurrection of the body. At the same time, neither is the word "*death*" here to be taken (with Hodge) in the loose sense of 'penal evil,' or 'any evil inflicted for the punishment of sin and for the support of law.' This is far too indefinite, making "*death*" a mere figure of speech to denote 'penal evil' in general, an idea foreign to the simplicity of Scripture. By "*death*" here we are to understand the sinner's *destruction*—in the only sense in which he is capable of destruction. Even temporal death is called "*destruction*" (Deut. vii. 23; 1 Sam. v. 11, etc.)—as extinguishing all that men regard as *life*. But a further destruction—extending to the soul as well as the body, and reaching into the future world—is clearly indicated in such passages as Matt. vii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 9; 2 Pet. iii. 16. This is the penal "*death*" of our section; and only when viewed in this all-comprehensive sense does it retain its proper meaning. From the moment that sin is voluntarily cherished and chosen, and found in the sinner's skirts, "*life*"—in the favour of God, in fellowship with God, in voluntary and delighted subjection to God—is a blighted thing. In this sense the bitterness of that word, "In the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die," was certainly experienced by Adam as soon as he fell, for he "fled from the presence of the Lord God" as soon as he "heard His voice in the garden." From thenceforward, as head of the human race, he was "dead while he lived." When, however, the sinner dies, the separation of soul and body which then takes place carries his "*destruction*" a stage further; dissolving his connection with all those scenes out of which he extracted a pleasurable but unblest existence, dragging him before his Judge, as a disembodied spirit first, but at length in the body too, to be "punished with *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." This final extinction in soul and body of all that constitutes "*life*" in its only worthy sense, but yet, eternal consciousness of a blighted existence—this, in its amplest and most awful sense, is "*death*." Not that Adam understood all that. Enough if he knew that "the day" of his disobedience was to be the close of his blissful "*life*." That he should understand all that was wrapt up in that single word "*die*," was not necessary. Nor need we suppose all that to be intended in every passage where the word "*death*" occurs. Enough that all this is in the bosom of the *thing*, and will be realized by as many as refuse to be subjects of the blessed Reign of Grace. Beyond all doubt, the whole of this is intended in such sublime and comprehensive passages as this one: "God . . . gave His Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not *perish* but have *everlasting life*" (John iii. 16). And should not the untold horrors of such a "*death*"—already hanging over all who have not taken flight into 'the Second Adam,' hasten that momentous step; that so, having "received the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness," they also may "*reign in life* by the One, Jesus Christ"?

CHAP. VI. 1 **WHAT** shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin,  
 2 that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are  
 3 dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so  
 many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized

#### THE FRUITS OF JUSTIFICATION IN THE NEW LIFE (CHAP. VI.).

As the closing words of chap. v. left the believer "reigning in life through Jesus Christ our Lord," the apostle is naturally led on to treat of the nature of that life, as one not only of a *right* to live, so to speak—condemnation to death being swept away and justification secured in Christ Jesus—but of a *holy character*. To this fruitful topic the apostle devotes two whole chapters, this and the next one. The present chapter treats of the Union of believers to Christ, as the Source of the new life; and the following one continues this subject, but follows it up with some profound considerations on the great principles of sin and holiness in fallen men, both under law and under grace.

*The general bearing of gratuitous justification on a holy life (1, 2).* 1. **What shall we say then?** On this phrase see on iv. 1. **Shall we** ('Are we to') **continue in sin, that grace may abound?**—acting on the detestable principle, 'The more sin, the more glory to the grace that pardons it;' an objection that might be drawn from what had just before been said about "grace abounding above the abundance of sin." This further confirms the remark made before, that had the apostle taught that justification is grounded in any degree on our good works, no such pretext could have been raised; whereas against a justification *purely gratuitous* the objection has a certain plausibility in it, and has in fact been urged against it in every age. That it *was* urged from the first, we see from chap. iii. 8; and from Gal. v. 13, 1 Pet. ii. 16, and Jude 4, we cannot fail to gather that some who were called Christians actually gave occasion to the charge. But that it was a total perversion of the true doctrine of grace the apostle proceeds now to shew. 2. **God forbid**—'That be far from us:' the instincts of the new nature revolt at the thought. **We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?** This, the original order of the words, gives a fine sharpness to the appeal, whether in *such* persons the thought of continuing in sin could be endured. 'It is not (says *Grotius* very well here) the entire impossibility but rather the shamefulfulness [or better, the shameful inconsistency] of the thing which is here expressed, as in Matt. vi. 28, and Gal. iv. 9. For shameful it is, after we have been washed, to roll again into the mire.'

3-11. *How union to Christ effects the believer's death to sin and resurrection to new life.*—3. **What?** On this exclamation see on iii. 29. **Are ye ignorant that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus<sup>1</sup> were baptized into his death:** Our whole sinful case and condition having been taken up into Christ's Person, when He was "made sin for us," it has been brought to an end in His death; and therefore the baptism of believers is a public proclamation on their part, that they have surrendered the whole state and life of sin, as in Christ now a dead thing. They have sealed themselves to be not only "the righteousness of God in Him," but to be "a new creature;" and as they cannot be in Christ to the one effect and not to the other—for the two things are one and inseparable, they have, by their "baptism into Christ's

<sup>1</sup> Such is the right order of these two words here, as all the authorities without exception testify.

- 4 into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should
- 5 walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of*

death," bidden solemn and public farewell to all connexion with sin. How, then, can they live any longer therein? Of all this the apostle asks, Are ye strangers to it? Not that, quite *as put here*, it may ever have been brought before the Roman Christians; nor is it likely that any of the churches, save those who were favoured with Pauline teaching, were much better off. But it was of that nature that it needed only to be presented to intelligent and teachable Christians, to be instinctively recognised and acquiesced in, as the very truths they had been rudimentally instructed in from the first. (Compare the similar question of our Lord to His disciples at the supper table, John xiv. 5.)

4. We were buried therefore with him: the thing being viewed as a *past* act, on their reception of the Gospel, and baptismally expressed in their public profession of this, *through baptism into death*. The same baptism which proclaimed our participation in His *death* proclaimed also our part in His *burial*. To leave a dead body to lie unburied is represented in heathen authors and in Scripture alike as the greatest indignity (Rev. xi. 8, 9). It was fitting, therefore, that Christ, after "dying for our sins," should be "buried" (1 Cor. xv. 4). As this was the last and lowest step of His humiliation, so it was the honourable dissolution of His last link of connexion with that whole sinful condition and life which His death brought to an end. *that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father*—by "the glory of His power" (2 Thess. i. 9), "the exceeding greatness of His power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph. i. 19, 20), proclaiming by that majestic act His judicial satisfaction with and acceptance of His whole work (compare 1 Cor. vi. 14; 2 Cor. xiii. 4). *so we also* (risen with Him) *might walk in newness of life*.

*Note.*—Whether the *mode* of baptism—by immersion—is here alluded to, as a kind of symbolical burial and resurrection, as many think, is not at all clear. Indeed it is by no means certain that baptism by immersion was practised in apostolic times. In the case of the 3000 on the day of Pentecost, it would have been impossible. In the case of our Lord and of the Ethiopian eunuch, it was certainly by affusion, not immersion; and as "sprinkling" and "washing" are quite indifferently used in the New Testament to express the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Jesus, there can be no doubt that if baptism *in any form* be a designed symbol of this, the mode of "sprinkling," or "washing" in any way, must be valid baptism. And just as the woman with the issue of blood got virtue out of Christ by simply *touching* Him, so the essence of baptism must lie in the simple *contact* of the element with the body, symbolizing living contact with the crucified Saviour—the *mode* and *extent* of the suffusion being perfectly indifferent—to be regulated by the climate and the circumstances of each particular case.

5. For if we have become united with him<sup>1</sup> by the likeness of his death—so identified with Him in His death, we shall be also by the likeness of

<sup>1</sup> The word signifies properly 'connate' or 'born with,' then 'cognate,' 'akin to.'

- 6 *his* resurrection : knowing this, that our old man is crucified  
 with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that  
 7 henceforth we should not serve sin ; for he that is dead is  
 8 freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe  
 9 that we shall also live with him : knowing that Christ being

*his* resurrection—if the one is a living reality, the other will certainly be so also. 6. *knowing this*. The apostle grows more definite and vivid in expressing the sin-destroying efficacy of our union with the crucified and risen One, and the Roman Christians are supposed to “know” what is now to be expressed (though only in the sense explained on ver. 2). *that our old man was crucified with him*—‘our old selves,’ all that we were in our old unregenerate state before this union with Christ (compare such passages as Col. iii. 9, 10 ; Eph. vii. 22–24 ; Gal. ii. 20 ; v. 24 ; vi. 14 ; John iii. 3 ; Tit. iii. 5). *that the body of sin might be destroyed* (‘annulled,’ ‘abolished’). The word here used is a favourite one with our apostle, used only once by any other New Testament writer but 25 times by him, besides once in Hebrews (ii. 14). *that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin*. It is of no small importance to fix the precise sense of “the body of sin” here. A great many expositors take it figuratively, for ‘the mass of sin.’ But the marked allusions to the actual body which we find in nearly all the corresponding passages forbid our expounding it in this loose way. Thus, a few verses below, “Let not sin therefore reign in *your mortal body*,” etc. (ver. 12), “Neither yield ye *your members* as instruments of unrighteousness” (ver. 13). “As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness,” etc. In ch. vii. 23, “the law of sin” is said to be “in the *members* :” and in ch. viii. 13, “living after the flesh” is spoken of as doing “the deeds of the *body*.” These passages put it, we think, beyond doubt that by “the *body* of sin,” some connection of sin with our corporeal nature is intended. But neither must we go to the opposite extreme, of concluding that the *body* is here spoken of as *the proper seat or principle of sin* ; for the seat of sin, as such, certainly does not lie in the animal nature, but in the will. When all the passages in which such phraseology is used are weighed together, we think it will appear clearly that whatever may be the reason for the *body* being so expressly named, *the whole principle of sin* in our fallen nature is here meant—its most intellectual and spiritual, equally with its lower and more corporeal, features. It only remains to inquire why this is called “the body of sin.” The more immediate occasion of it was undoubtedly the mention of *Christ’s* crucifixion and burial ; and as the crucifixion and burial of our old man with him (the nailing of us, so to say, as the doomed children of Adam, to the accursed tree, and thereafter laying us in His grave) was to be emphatically put before the reader, nothing could be more natural than to represent this as bringing to an end “the *body* of sin.” Taken in this sense, the expression denotes ‘sin as it dwells in us, in our present *embodied* condition, under the law of the fall.’ This sense will be seen to come out clearly in ver. 12, and in ch. xii. 1.

7. *for he that hath died is justified* (‘has got his discharge’) *from sin*. This remarkable expression was at one time in current use of murderers, who when executed at a certain spot in Edinburgh were said to be ‘justified at the Grassmarket.’ 8. But if we died with Christ—the act is regarded as past and done once for all, we believe that we shall also live with him. The future here is the same as in ver. 5, expressing not what is to happen here-



raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more  
 10 dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin  
 11 once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise  
 reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but  
 alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye  
 13 should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your mem-  
 bers *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield  
 yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and  
 14 your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. For

after, but to what is the certain consequence of our past death with Christ to sin. 9. knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him. Though Christ's death was in the most absolute sense a voluntary act (John x. 17, 18; Acts ii. 24), that voluntary surrender gave death a rightful "dominion over Him." But this once past, "death," even in that sense, "no more hath dominion over Him."

10. For the death that he died, he died unto (that is, 'in obedience to the claims of') sin once—*Gr.* 'once for all,' as Heb. vii. 27; ix. 17; x. 10. but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God—no longer as in the days of His flesh, under the burden of the "sin" which He "was made for us," which—though "He knew no sin" and so enjoyed the peace of an untroubled conscience—made Him a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," offering up "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears;" but now that He hath put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He liveth the acquitted and accepted Surety, unchallenged and unclouded by the claims of sin.  
 11. Even so, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Not content with shewing that his doctrine had no tendency to relax the obligations to a holy life, the apostle now summons believers to manifest the sanctifying tendency of their new standing in the dead and risen Christ.

*N.B.*—As in this and the succeeding verses the five following words—"Sin," "Obedience," "Righteousness," "Uncleanness," and "Iniquity"—are figuratively used to represent a MASTER, to make this manifest to the eye, and so save explanations, we shall print them in *capitals*.

*How believers, so dead and risen with Christ, should henceforth conduct themselves* (vers. 12-23). 12. Let not **SIN** therefore (as though it were still your master) reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof<sup>2</sup>—the lusts of the body, as the Greek makes evident; but only as the instrument by which the sins of the heart become facts of the outward life, and as itself the seat of the lower appetites; and it is called "our mortal body"—not so much to cheer us with the thought of how soon we shall have done with it, still less to warn us how short-lived are the pleasures of sin, but probably to remind us how unsuitable is the reign of sin in those who are "alive from the dead." But the reign here meant is the unchecked dominion of sin *within* us. Its *outward acts* are next referred to. 13. Neither present your members unto **SIN** as instruments of unrighteousness, but present

<sup>1</sup> "Christ Jesus" is the order even of the received text, and the following words are not well attested.

<sup>2</sup> Such is the true reading here.

sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the  
 15 law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we  
 16 are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know  
 ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey,  
 his servants ye are to whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto  
 17 death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be

*yourselves.* Observe how grandly the thought rises here. Not only does it rise from a negative exhortation in the first clause to a positive in the second, but it rises from the *members* in the one clause to our whole renewed *selves* in the other. Being alive now unto God from the dead, he bids us, instead of yielding our members to the obedience of their old Master, first yield our whole new selves unto GOD (as our new and rightful Master) *as alive from the dead*—Do this *in the capacity* of men risen with Christ, and (as the natural fruit of this) *your members* (till now prostituted to sin) as *instruments* (for the practice) of *righteousness unto God*. A significant transition also has been noticed here from one tense to another. In the first clause—“Neither yield ye your members instruments of unrighteousness”—the *present* tense is used, denoting the *habitual* practice of men in their old unregenerate state ; in the next clause, “but yield yourselves unto God,” it is the *aorist*—suggesting the *one act for all*, of self-surrender, which the renewed believer performs immediately on his passing from death to life, and to which he only sets his continuous seal in all his after life.

But what if indwelling sin should prove too strong for us? The reply of the next verse is, But it will not. 14. **For SIN shall not have dominion over you** (as the slaves of a tyrant lord) : **for ye are not under the law, but under grace.** The sense and force of this profound and precious assurance all depends on what is meant by being “under the law” and being “under grace.” Mere philological criticism will do nothing to help us here. We must go to the heart of all Pauline teaching to discover this. To be “UNDER THE LAW,” then, is, first, to be ‘under its claim to entire obedience on pain of death ;’ and so, secondly, to underlie the curse of the law as having violated its righteous demands (Gal. iii. 10). And since any power to fulfil the law can reach the sinner only through Grace—of which the law knows nothing—it follows, lastly, that to be “under the law” is to be shut up under an *inability to keep it*, and consequently to be the *helpless slave of sin*. On the other hand, to be “UNDER GRACE,” is to be under the glorious canopy and saving effects of that “Grace which bringeth salvation” and “reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.” Whereas, when “under the law” Sin *could not but* have dominion over them, now that they are “under Grace” Sin *cannot* have dominion over them, cannot but be subdued under them, and Grace is more than conqueror. (This last view is richly unfolded in the first part of chap. viii.) 15. **What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.** Resuming the question of ver. 1, under a somewhat new form, the inconsistency and ingratitude of such a return is indignantly held up and repudiated, as abhorrent to the renewed mind. 16. **Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants** (‘bond-servants’) **unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey**—a dictate of common sense (see John viii. 44), **whether of SIN unto** (issuing in) **death, or of OBEDIENCE unto** (resulting in) **righteousness?**—as an enduring character and condition (compare Matt. vi,

thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. But now being made free from

24; 2 Pet. ii. 19; 1 John ii. 27). 17. But thanks be to God, that whereas ye were (bond) servants of SIN, ye became obedient from the heart to that form ('type,' 'pattern,' or 'mould') of teaching whereunto ye were delivered—that conception of Christian truth which, when ye received it from your teachers, stamped its own impress upon you, ensuring your severance from the whole life of sin. 18. and being made free from (your old master) SIN, ye became (bond) servants of RIGHTEOUSNESS:—'Ye were emancipated from one master only to become the willing bondsmen of Another.' There is, in fact, no middle state of personal independence: for that we were never made; for that we are not adapted; to that we have no claim. When we would not that God should reign over us, we were in righteous judgment "sold under SIN." But now, *emancipated into subjection to RIGHTEOUSNESS*, we experience our true freedom and attain to the normal condition of our nature as originally constituted. 19. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh—I descend to the level of human experience in respect of master and servant, because of the weakness of your spiritual apprehension. for as ye presented your members as servants to UNCLEANNESS and to INIQUITY unto (the practice of) iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to RIGHTEOUSNESS unto (the attainment of) sanctification:—'With what *heartiness* ye served Sin, and to what *lengths* ye went in that service, so be ye now stimulated to serve a better Master.' 20. For when ye were servants of SIN, ye were free in regard of RIGHTEOUSNESS. Since no servant can serve two masters, and much less two whose interests are in deadly collision, and each of whom demands the whole man, so ye, while in the service of SIN, could be in no real sense the servants of RIGHTEOUSNESS, and never did it one act of willing obedience. Whatever might be your sense of its claims, your service was all and always given to SIN. Ye had thus your full experience of the nature and benefits of SIN's service. 21. What fruit then had ye ('what satisfaction, what advantage') at that time, in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? This "shame" is not that disgust at themselves and remorse of conscience by which even those most hopelessly "sold under sin" are often stung to the quick. It is that ingenuous self-reproach which pierces the hearts of the children of God as they look back on their past life in the service of sin, and upon the dishonour it did to God, the violence it did to their better feelings, its deadening and degrading effects, and the "second death" to which it was dragging them down, when Grace arrested them. for the end of those things *is* death—'abiding *Satisfaction*,' did I ask? They have left only *shame*: per-

sin, and become servants to God, ye have yqur fruit unto  
 23 holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin  
*is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus  
 Christ our Lord.

manent '*advantage*'? "The end of them is *death*." (On the sense of "death," as here understood, see on chap. v., concluding *Notes*, No. 3.)  
 22. But now—as if it were unspeakable relief to get away from such a subject, being made free from (bondage to) **SIN**, and become (bond) **servants to GOD**, ye have your fruit unto sanctification—as in ver. 19, meaning that *permanently holy state and character* which is built gradually up out of "the fruits of righteousness." They have their "fruit" unto this, in contrast with what (wretched) "fruit" they had in the things they were now ashamed of, and—in contrast with the "death" in which those things "end," the end of this better service is **eternal life**—in the sense of the "life" spoken of at the close of chap. v. 23. For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is **eternal life** in Jesus Christ our Lord. In this closing verse, as pointed as it is brief, we have the marrow, the most fine gold of the Gospel. On the one hand, just as the labourer is worthy of his hire, feels it to be his due, and claims it as his right, so is "death" the due of sin, the wages the sinner has well wrought for—his own. But "eternal life" is in no sense or degree the wages of our righteousness; we do nothing whatever to earn or become entitled to it, and never can: it is therefore, in the most absolute sense, "**THE GIFT OF GOD**." Grace reigns in the bestowal of it in every case, and that "in Jesus Christ our Lord," as the righteous Channel of it. In view of this, no one that hath tasted that the Lord is gracious can choose but exclaim, from first to last, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

*Note.*—The fundamental principle of Gospel-obedience is as original as it is divinely rational: that 'we are set free from the law in order to keep it, and are brought graciously under servitude to the law, in order to be free.' So long as we know no principle of obedience but the terrors of the law, which condemns all the breakers of it, and knows nothing whatever of grace either to pardon the guilty or to purify the polluted, we are shut up under a moral impossibility of genuine and acceptable obedience; whereas when Grace lifts us out of this state, and, through union to a righteous Surety, brings us into a state of conscious reconciliation and loving surrender of heart to a God of salvation, we immediately feel the glorious *liberty to be holy*; and the assurance that "Sin shall not have dominion over us" is as sweet to our renewed tastes and aspirations as the ground of it is felt to be firm, "because we are not under the Law, but under Grace."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See an exquisite illustration of this in a letter of Luther to his friend Staupitz, who first opened his eyes, as the God-sent instrument, to this principle of new and joyous obedience (*Luther's Briefe*, De Wette, vol. i. No. lxvii.).

- CHAP. VII. 1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as  
 2 long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband.  
 3 So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no  
 4 adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring

#### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

The new life in Christ is here presented in some fresh lights and some of its sterner aspects, going to the depths of action in our spiritual nature both before and after conversion.

1-6. *The believer's severance from the law, through union to Christ, illustrated from the law of marriage.*

In the preceding chapter the apostle had given his believing readers the cheering assurance that "sin should not have dominion over them, because they were not *under the law* but under grace." But *how* they came to be no longer under the law, he had not particularly shewn. Generally, it had been made clear enough throughout the whole preceding argument; but here the apostle goes into the profound principles involved in the change.

1. Know ye not,<sup>1</sup> brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,)—the law of Moses is particularly in view—with which, though not themselves Jews (see on chap. i. 13), these Roman Christians were sufficiently acquainted; but the thing here stated is true of any good marriage law, being founded in nature: how that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth?—so long, and no longer. Most of those who think that the apostle is here teaching the *death of the law*, suppose the law to be here meant, and not the married person; and they translate accordingly, 'so long as *it* (the law) liveth.' But this is plainly wrong; for as the apostle is stating a well-known fact regarding the marriage law, it would have been absurd to say that it has dominion so long as it lives or has dominion. Clearly the thing meant is, that the law's dominion over a man ceases with a man's life. 4. Wherefore . . . ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ ("broken for you"), that ye should be married to another—*Gr.* 'that ye should become another's'—even to him who was raised from the dead, (to the intent) that we might bring forth fruit unto

<sup>1</sup> We leave the disjunctive particle here untranslated, as in the Authorised Version. The Revised Version, as usual, translates it—"Or know ye not," as they do in Matt. xxvi. 53, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, which we think is contrary to the genius of the English language where no sharp contrast to what immediately precedes is intended. If expressed at all, the proper word would be, "What?" as even the Revised Version renders it in 1 Cor. xiv. 36. But even this seems more than is required here. It answers exactly to *an* in Latin, when it begins an interrogative sentence.

5 forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the

God—the fruit of holy living here viewed as the offspring of this union with the Risen One.

It has been thought by a number of excellent critics that the apostle has here expressed the opposite of what his argument required—has said that *we* died to the law, whereas his argument is, that the *law* died to *us*—and that he purposely inverted the figure to avoid the harshness to Jewish ears of such an idea as *the death of the law*. But if this idea would sound harsh to Jewish ears, it would not be softened by insinuating without expressing it, much less by saying just the reverse of what was meant. But they mistake the apostle's design in employing this figure, which was merely to illustrate the general principle, that '*death dissolves legal obligation.*' It was essential to his argument that *we*, not the law, should be the dying party, since it is we that are "crucified with Christ," and not the law. This death dissolves our marriage-obligation to the law, leaving us at liberty to contract a new relation—to be joined to the Risen One, in order to spiritual fruitfulness, to the glory of God. The confusion, then, is in the expositors, not the text; and it has arisen from not observing that, *like Jesus Himself, believers are here viewed as having a double life*—the old sin-condemned life, which they lay down with Christ, and the new life of acceptance and holiness to which they rise with their Surety and Head; and all the issues of this new life, in Christian obedience, are regarded as the "fruit" of this blessed marriage-union to the Risen One.

But another thing must be observed in this profound verse. It seems to ascribe to the believer not only a double marriage (first to the law and then to Christ), but a double marriage to Christ Himself—first to the Crucified and then to the Risen Christ. But this is only apparent. The spiritual reality, rightly apprehended, dissipates the seeming incongruity. When the apostle says that we become dead to the law by the body of Christ (or, that our marriage relation to the law ceased with our union to the Crucified One), and then adds that this was in order to our being united to the Risen One, the meaning is not that the union to *Christ crucified* was dissolved, in order to our union to *Christ risen*. It is the necessities of the figure that occasion this manner of speech. And what is meant is plainly this, that the expiatory death of Christ, to whom they have been united by faith, dissolved the claims of the law on believers as thoroughly as the husband's death sets his wife at liberty; and now that Christ is risen from the dead, that same union to Him is in reality their new marriage to the Living One—in virtue of which the *requirements* of the law are so far from being disregarded, or more feebly met than when we were in bondage to it, that the "fruit" of our marriage union to the Risen One is an obedience to God such as we never did nor could yield before. See John xv. 8, where the "fruit" of Union to Christ is quite similarly set forth—only there under the figure of a *vegetable*, as here of a *conjugal* union.

How such holy fruitfulness was impossible while we were under the law, and before our union to Christ, is now declared. 5. For when we were in the flesh. Here, for the first time in this Epistle, is introduced that remarkable and expressive phraseology of which so much use is made in the next chapter and in the Epistle to the Galatians, which all Christendom (earnest and enlightened Christendom, at least) has ever since regarded as a precious heritage, has incorporated with its vocabulary, and will never dispense with

6 motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had

in expressing some of the deepest truths and principles of spiritual religion. What is meant by the "flesh" in such statements is first clearly seen in John iii. 6, where we have the proper *matrix*—the rudimentary germ—of such phraseology; though it pervades the ethical portions of the Old Testament. It means our fallen nature, all that we bring into the world by birth, humanity under the entire law of the fall, the law of sin and death, our nature as corrupted, depraved, and under the curse. To "be in the flesh," then, must mean to be in our unregenerate state, under the unbroken, unsubdued dominion of our corrupt principles and affections. But the full import of this pregnant expression will open upon us as we advance in the exposition of this chapter and the following one. **the sinful passions** (*Gr.* 'passions of sins')—feelings prompting to the commission of sins, which were by (or 'through') **the law**—that is, which by occasion of the law forbidding those sins only the more fretted or irritated our corruptions towards the commission of them, as will more fully appear under vers. 7-9, **did work in our members**—as the instruments by which such inward stirrings find vent in action, and become facts of the life (as has been remarked on chap. vi. 6) **to bring forth fruit unto death**—death in the sense of vi. 26. Thus hopeless is all holy fruit before union to Christ.

6. But now (see on this expression on chap. vi. 22) **we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden**. The reading of the A. V. here—"that being dead wherein we were held," meaning the law—is a surprising mistake, for not only has it absolutely no textual authority, but it is not even the reading of the received text (as printed in 1550), and is only found in the reprint of it by the Elzevirs, who took it from Beza. But the worst of this reading is, that it is inconsistent with the whole strain of the argument. For the apostle never says that the law is dead, but that *we* have died to it through union to Him who received its penalty against the breach of it in His death. **so that we serve in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter**—not in mere literal, mechanical, heartless compliance with a set of external rules of conduct, but in a "new" way—from new motives, with new tastes, to new ends, as emancipated servants of a new and loved Master (compare chap. ii. 29; 2 Cor. iii. 6).

7-13. *Helplessness under the law no fault of the law itself.* 7. **What shall we say then?** (see on this expression in vi. 1). **Is the law sin? God forbid**—'Is the law to blame for stirring our corruptions to break it? Away with such a thought.' **Nay** (on the contrary), **I had not known sin except through the law**.

The reader should mark here the change of person. *From these words downwards to the end of this chapter the apostle speaks no longer in the first and second persons plural—"we," "ye"—but exclusively in the first person singular—I.* In this he is representing neither the Jewish nation nor mankind in general (as is often erroneously conceived), but depicting his own

not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not  
8 covet: but sin, taking occasion by the commandment,  
wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without  
9 the law sin *was* dead. For I was alive without the law

views and feelings, his own state and character, at different periods of his religious history. But another thing of even more importance should be noted. From ver. 7 to the end of ver. 13 he speaks entirely in the *past tense*; whereas from ver. 14 to the end of the chapter he speaks exclusively in the *present tense*. And as the words of ver. 9, "I was alive without the law once," clearly refer to his unconverted state, so (as we shall see when we come to expound them) all from ver. 14 to the end of the chapter is a description of what he experienced in his converted state, and can only be thus properly understood.

When the apostle says in this ver. 7, "I had not known sin but through the law," it is indispensable to fix precisely what he here means by "sin." It certainly is not sin in the *act*. Nor is it 'sin in general;' for though true enough in itself, this will not suit what is said in the following verses, where the sense of the word is the same as here. The only meaning which suits all that is said of it in this place is 'the *principle* of sin in the *heart* of fallen man.' The sense, then, is this: 'It was by means of the law that I came to know what a virulence and strength of sinful propensity I had within me.' The *existence* of this it did not need the law to reveal to him; for even the heathens recognised and wrote of it: but the dreadful nature and desperate power of it the law alone discovered—in the way now to be described. **for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not lust. 8. But sin (i.e. my indwelling corruption), taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of lusting.** Here the same Greek word is, in the Authorised Version, unfortunately rendered by three different English ones—"lust," "covet," "concupiscence"—which obscures the meaning. The Revised Version avoids this by using "covet" throughout: "I had not known coveting (margin, or *lust*) except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet: but sin . . . wrought in me all manner of coveting." But, with the Authorised Version, we think the apostle had in his eye that form of "coveting" which is expressed by "concupiscence." We have used the word which seems to us best to suit the whole sense. Using the word "lust" only—in the wide sense of all 'irregular desire,' or every outgoing of the heart towards anything forbidden—the sense will come out thus: 'For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not lust. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment (that commandment which expressly forbids it), wrought in me all manner of lusting.' See Prov. ix. 17, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." Compare also the well-known saying of Horace: *Nitimur in vetitum nefas, cupimusque negata*. This gives a deeper view of the tenth commandment than the mere words suggest. The apostle saw in it the prohibition not only of desire after *certain things there specified*, but of 'desire after *everything divinely forbidden*;' in other words, all 'lusting' or 'irregular desire.' It was this which "he had not known but by the law." The law forbidding all such desire so stirred his corruption that it wrought in him "all manner of lusting"—desire of every sort after what was forbidden.

for without (*Gr.* 'apart from') the law sin is (not *was*) dead—"before its



once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and  
 10 I died; and the commandment, which *was ordained to*  
 11 *life*, I found *to be* unto death: for sin, taking occasion by  
 12 the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*. Where-  
 fore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just,  
 13 and good. Was then that which is good made death unto  
 me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working  
 death in me by that which is good; that sin by the command-  
 ment might become exceeding sinful.

extensive demands and prohibitions (see Ps. cxix. 96) come to stir our corrupt nature, the sinful principle lies so dormant, so torpid, that its virulence and power are unknown, and to our own feeling it is as good as "dead." 9. And (accordingly) I *was alive without* (*Gr.* 'apart from') *the law once*—formerly: 'in the days of my ignorance, when (in this sense) a stranger to the law, I deemed myself all right, in good standing before God.' but when the commandment came—prohibiting all that my sinful nature was prone to—*sin revived*—'came to life;' shewing plainly that what the apostle alone here means by "sin" is *an inward principle*: this revived in its malignity and strength; it unexpectedly revealed itself, as if sprung from the dead. and I died—'I saw myself, in the eye of a law never kept, and not to be kept, a dead man.' 10. and (thus) the commandment which *was unto life*—designed to give life through the keeping of it—I found *to be unto death*—through the breaking of it. 11. for sin ('my sinful nature'), taking occasion through the commandment, beguiled me—drawing me aside into the very thing which it forbade, and through it slew me—discovered me to myself to be a condemned and undone man (compare Isa. vi. 5: "Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone"). 12. So that the law is holy, and the commandment—that one in particular so often referred to, which forbids all lusting, and on which some reflection might seem to have been cast in the preceding verses—even that commandment is holy, and righteous, and good. 13. Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid.—'Does then the blame of my death lie with the law? Away with the thought.' But sin became death unto me, to the end that it might be shewn to be sin—a rare and pregnant expression, meaning, that it might be shewn in its naked deformity, as by working death to me through that which is good: that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful (a singular phrase, suggested, one would think, by the difficulty of finding any word adequate to the case); 'that its enormous turpitude might stand out to view, through its turning God's holy, just, and good law into a provocative to the very thing which it forbids.'

So much for *the law in relation to the unregenerate*, of whom the apostle takes himself as the example—*first*, in his ignorant, self-satisfied condition; *next*, under humbling discoveries of his inability to keep the law, through inward contrariety to it; *finally*, as self-condemned, and already, in law, a dead man. Some inquire to what period of his recorded history these circumstances relate. But there is no reason to think they were wrought into such conscious and explicit discovery at any period of his history before he "saw the Lord in the way;" and though, "amidst the multitude of his thoughts within him" during his memorable three days' blindness immediately

14 For we know that the law is spiritual : but I am carnal, sold  
15 under sin. For that which I do I allow not : for what I would,  
16 that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that  
which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

after that, such views of the law and of himself would doubtless be tossed up and down till they *took shape* much as they are here described (see Acts ix. 9), we regard this whole description of his inward struggles and progress rather as the *finished result* of all his past recollections and subsequent reflections on his unregenerate state—which he throws into historical form only for greater vividness.

14. *As indwelling sin was too powerful for the law to control while we were under it, so our subjection to the law even in our regenerate state is due, not to the law itself, but wholly to the gracious renovation of our inner man* (14-25).

We have observed that while the apostle speaks in his own person from ver. 7 to the end of the chapter, he speaks in the *past tense* down to the end of ver. 13, and thereafter, from ver. 14 to the end of the chapter, in the *present tense*. We believe that this forms the key to the true sense of those two much controverted divisions of the chapter respectively; vers. 7-13 depicting his *unregenerate* state and experience, while in ver. 14 to the end we have a vivid picture of what he felt and how he acted in his *renewed* character. The best evidence of this will be found, not in any single verse or isolated statement in this portion, but in the whole strain of it, to which we request very careful attention.

14. *For we know*—that is, it is a recognised principle. But this manner of speaking is sometimes employed to express, not what is actually and consciously recognised, but what cannot be denied, and will commend itself on reflection to every thoughtful reader. *that the law is spiritual*—in its nature and demands. Just as a “spiritual man” is a man transformed—animated and led by the Holy Spirit, so the law—which is “holy, just, and good” (ver. 12), embodying the demands of Him who is a Spirit—cannot but breathe spirituality in its nature and intent. *but I am carnal*.<sup>1</sup> The meaning is made perfectly plain by the opposition of “carnal” to “spiritual”—‘The law being spiritual, demands spiritual obedience; but that is just what I, being carnal, am incapable of yielding.’ But the meaning is rendered still more evident by the explanatory clause which follows : *sold under sin*—enslaved to it as my tyrant master. The “I” here is of course not the regenerate man, of whom this is certainly not true; but (as will presently appear) neither is it the unregenerate man—from whose case the apostle has passed away. It remains, then, that it is the *sinful principle in the renewed man*, as is expressly stated in ver. 18. 15. *For that which I do I know not; I recognise it not, approve it not* (Ps. i. 6, “The Lord *knoweth* the way of the righteous”). “In obeying the impulses of my carnal nature I act rather as the slave of another will than my own as a renewed man.” *for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do.* 16. *But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good*

<sup>1</sup> The true reading here, if external evidence alone is to decide, is, not ‘fleshly,’ but ‘fleshy’ (expressing the *material* of which a thing is made). But either the copyists did not distinguish the two forms—differing in Greek as in English only by one letter—or the best attested reading is an error,

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in  
 18 me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth  
 no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to  
 19 perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I  
 would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.  
 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but  
 21 sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I  
 —the judgment of my inner man goes along with the law, to my own con-  
 demnation. 17. So now it is no more I (my renewed self) that do it, but  
 sin that dwelleth in me—that principle of sin that still has its abode in me.

*Note.*—To explain this and the following statements, as very many expositors do, of the sins of unrenewed men against their better convictions, is to do painful violence to the apostle's language, and to affirm of the unregenerate what is untrue. That co-existence and mutual hostility of "flesh" and "spirit" in the same *renewed* man, which is so clearly taught in chap. viii. 4, etc., and Gal. v. 16, etc., is the true and only key to the language of this and the following verses. It is hardly necessary to say that the apostle means not to disown the blame of yielding to his corruptions, by saying, 'It is not I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.' Early heretics thus abused his language; but the whole strain of the passage shews that his sole object in thus expressing himself was to bring more vividly before his readers the *conflict of two opposite principles*, and how entirely, as a new man—honouring from his inmost soul the law of God—he condemned and renounced his corrupt nature, with its affections and lusts, its stirrings and its outgoings, root and branch. The acts of a slave (it has been well observed) are indeed his own acts; but not being performed with the full assent and consent of his soul, they are not fair tests of the real state of his feelings. 18. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not (or 'not so').<sup>1</sup> Here again we have the *double self* of the renewed man —'In me dwelleth no good; but this corrupt self is not my true self; it is that hateful self that still dwells in my real, renewed, recognised, realised self.' 19. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do ('practise'). Expositors, in quoting as they do from heathen authors in illustration of what is here stated, make too little of the vast difference between what *they* mean and what the *apostle* means. The *language* used by both is much the same, but the *feelings* in view in the one are as different from those in view of the other as the difference between *flesh* and *spirit*. 'Sorrow for sin' may express the regret for doing wrong of those who nevertheless have no intention of giving it up; but the cry "out of the depths" of a contrite heart, under the piercing sense of that indwelling sin which it hates and wrestles (with too partial success) to subdue, is unspeakably different. *Seneca*, it has been noted, calls the gods to witness that what he wills he does not will (*quod volo me nolle*). This is striking; but while not a few noble spirits would be ready to say the same of themselves, the spiritual mind is alive to the presence of sin in a far deeper sense. 20. But if what I would not, that I do, etc. This is but an emphatic repetition of ver. 17. 21. I find then the law (this principle, in me), that to me who would do good, evil is present—presents itself, soliciting

<sup>1</sup> Such seems the correct reading—without the words "I find."

22 would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in  
 23 the law of God after the inward man : but I see another law  
 in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and  
 bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my  
 24 members. O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver

me to prefer its desires to those of the other principle. 22. **For I delight in the law of God after the inward man**—"from the bottom of my heart." The word here used (and here only in the N. T.) is well rendered 'I delight'; and, as followed up by the emphatic words "after the inward man," expresses the deep joy of whole spiritual and emotional nature in the law of God, and conveys (as does the weaker word of ver. 16, rendered "consent") a state of mind and heart to which the unregenerate man is certainly a stranger. 23. **But I see a different law in my members** (see on ver. 5), **warring against the law of my mind, bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.** In this most pregnant verse, three things are to be observed : *First*, That the word "law" means an *inward principle of action, good or evil, operating with the fixedness and regularity of a law.* The apostle found two such laws within him : the one, "the law of sin in his members," called (in Gal. v. 17-24) "the flesh which lusteth against the spirit," "the flesh with the affections and lusts," *i.e.* the sinful principle in the regenerate ; the other, "the law of the mind," or the holy principle of the renewed nature. *Second*, When the apostle says he "sees" the one of these principles "warring against" the other, and "bringing him into captivity" to itself, *he is not referring to any actual rebellion going on within him while he was writing, or to any captivity to his own lusts then existing.* He is simply describing the two conflicting principles, and pointing out what it was the inherent property of each to aim at bringing about. It is "THE LAW OF THE MIND"—renewed by grace—to set its seal to God's law, approving of it and delighting in it, sighing to reflect it, and rejoicing in every step of its progress towards the complete embodiment of it : It is "THE LAW OF SIN in the members" to dislike and seduce us out of all spirituality, to carnalize the entire man, to enslave us wholly to our own corruptions. Such is the unchanging character of these two principles in all believers ; but the relative strength of each is different in different Christians. While some come so low, through "iniquities prevailing against them" (Ps. lxx. 3), that "the law of the mind" can at times be scarce felt at all, and they "forget that they have been purged from their old sins" (2 Pet. i. 9) ; others, habitually "walking in the Spirit," so "crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts," that "the law of sin" is practically dead. But it is with *the unchanging character of the two principles—not the varying strength of them*—that this verse has to do. *Third*, When the apostle describes himself as "*brought into captivity*" by the triumph of the sinful principle of his nature, he clearly speaks in the person of a *renewed* man. Men do not feel themselves to be in captivity in the territories of their own sovereign and associated with their own friends—while breathing a congenial atmosphere, and acting quite spontaneously. But here the apostle describes himself when drawn under the power of his sinful nature, as forcibly seized and reluctantly dragged to his enemy's camp, from which he would gladly make his escape. This ought to settle the question, whether he is here speaking as a regenerate man or the reverse. 24. **O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me**

25 me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

from the body of this death! The apostle speaks of the "body" here with reference to "the law of sin" which he had said was "in his members," but merely as the instrument by which the sin of the heart finds vent in action, and as itself the seat of the lower appetites (see on chap. vi. 6, and on ver. 5 of this chapter); and he calls it "the body of *this* death," as feeling, at the moment when he wrote, the horrors of that death into which it dragged him down (chap. vi. 21, and again on ver. 5 of this chapter). But the language is not that of a sinner newly awakened to the sight of his lost state: it is the cry of a living but agonized believer, weighed down under a burden which, though not his renewed self, is yet so dreadfully himself—as being responsible for it—that he cannot choose but long to shake it off from his renewed self. Nor does the question imply ignorance of the way of relief at the time referred to. It was designed only to prepare the way for that outburst of thankfulness for the divinely provided remedy which immediately follows. 25. I thank God the glorious *Source*, through Jesus Christ—the blessed *Channel* of deliverance. So then (to sum up the whole matter) with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin—*q.d.*, 'Such then is the unchanging character of these two principles within me: God's holy law is dear to my renewed mind, and has the willing service of my new man, although that corrupt nature which still remains in me listens to the dictates of sin.'

It is hoped that the foregoing exposition of this profound and much controverted section will commend itself to the thoughtful, exercised reader. Every other view of it will be found equally at variance with the apostle's language, when taken as a whole, and with Christian experience. Certain it is that those who have most successfully sounded the depths of the heart, both under sin and under grace, are the least able to conceive how any Christian can understand it of the unregenerate, and instinctively perceive in it a precious expression of their own experience as the struggling children of God. The great *Augustin* found no rest but in this view of it; and he was followed by those noble reformers, *Luther* and *Melanchthon*, *Calvin* and *Beza*. Of the moderns, *Olshausen* and *Philippi*, *Alford* and *Hodge*, take the same view, though it is to be regretted that weighty names are ranged on the other side. See a fine treatise on this whole subject, full of acute though modest criticism and Christian experience, by *Fraser of Pitcalzian* (and minister of *Alness*), edited after his death by *Dr. John Erskine* (1774), under the title of 'The Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, being a Critical Explication and Paraphrase of Rom. vi.—viii. 4, against the false interpretations of *Grotius*, *Hammond*, *Locke*, *Whitby*, *Taylor*, etc.'

In view of the great importance of this chapter, it may not be without use to append the following remarks:—(1) This whole chapter was of essential service to the Reformers in their contentings with the Church of Rome. When the divines of that Church, in a Pelagian spirit, denied that the sinful principle in our fallen nature—which they called 'Concupiscence,' and which is commonly called 'Original Sin'—had the nature of *sin* at all, they were triumphantly answered from this chapter, where—both in the first part of it, which speaks of it in the unregenerate, and in the second, which treats of its presence and acting in believers—it is explicitly, emphatically, and

CHAP. VIII. 1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after*

repeatedly called "*sin*." As such, they held it to be *damnable*. (See the 'Confessions' both of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches.) In the following century, the orthodox in Holland had the same controversy to wage with 'the Remonstrants' (the followers of Arminius), and they waged it on the field of this chapter. (2) There is a tendency in those who hold what is called the *tripartite* theory of the human constitution—*body, soul, and spirit*, considered as three distinct subjects or substances—to regard the first of these—the *body*—as the proper seat of sin, while the third—the *spirit*—is regarded as either unaffected by the fall, or only weakened as to its inherent power to act out its real character. In this view of our present condition, the spiritual struggle of believers consists in an effort of the *reason* to regain its proper ascendancy over the bodily appetites—the higher powers of our nature to conquer the lower. But according to the Bible, the whole of our nature—the higher equally with the lower faculties—has been brought under bondage to sin (see for example Eph. ii. 3); and as the renovating work of the Holy Ghost extends to the whole man, so the indwelling of the Spirit in believers causes them to "*delight in the law of God after the inward man*," which now "*sees the kingdom of God*" with a clarified vision that makes all things new. (3) If the first sight of the Cross by the eye of faith kindles feelings never to be forgotten, and in one sense never to be repeated—like the first view of an enchanting landscape—the experimental discovery, in the later stages of the Christian life, of its power to beat down and mortify inveterate corruption, to cleanse and heal from long-continued backslidings and frightful inconsistencies, and so to triumph over all that threatens to destroy those for whom Christ died as to bring them safe over the tempestuous seas of this life into the haven of eternal rest—this experimental discovery is attended with yet more heart-affecting wonder, draws forth deeper thankfulness, and issues in more exalted adoration of Him whose work Salvation is from first to last. (4) It is sad when such topics as those of this character are handled as mere questions of biblical interpretation or of systematic theology. Our great apostle could not treat of them apart from personal experience, of which the facts of his own life and the feelings of his own soul furnished him with illustrations as lively as they were apposite. When one is unable to go far into the investigation of indwelling sin, without breaking out into an "O wretched man that I am!" and cannot enter on the way of relief without exclaiming, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," he will find his meditations rich in fruit to his own soul, not to speak of the emotions he may enkindle in his readers.

THE COMPLETENESS OF THEM THAT ARE IN CHRIST JESUS  
STRETCHING OVER ALL TIME INTO ETERNITY (CHAP. VIII.).

In this surpassing chapter the several streams of the preceding arguments meet and flow in one "river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," until it seems to lose itself in the ocean of a blissful eternity.

1-13. *Indwelling corruption overcome through the indwelling of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.*

1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ*

## 2 the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath

**Jesus.** The inference here drawn (in the word "therefore") is in part from the immediately preceding context, but much more from all that precedes :— 'We may now, therefore, hold it as an established truth, that dire and deadly as is the struggle we have depicted between the law of the renewed mind and the law of sin in our members, it is the struggle, after all, of those who cannot but come well out of it—of those who, being "in Christ Jesus," have the very standing before God of Christ Himself.' At the same time, this is no mere legal arrangement—it is a union in life; believers, through the indwelling of Christ's Spirit in them, having one life with Him, as truly as the head and the members of the same body have one life.<sup>1</sup>

2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me (that is, as soon as I was "in Christ Jesus") free ('set me at liberty') from the law of sin and death. As the sense of this verse must rule that of the profound verse which follows it, and two very different senses of it have been contended for, it must be examined with some care. By "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," some of the elder German divines, followed by some in our own day, understand *the Gospel*. In accordance with this, they naturally take "the law of sin and death" to mean the law of God. The reasons for this view are thus stated by Hodge :—(1) This verse is intended to explain why there is no condemnation to believers; now, if it means (as most critics hold) that the regenerating power of the Spirit frees believers from the power of their inward corruption, it will follow that our regeneration is the cause of our justification, which is totally opposed to the apostle's teaching. But if this verse is understood to express the believer's deliverance from the condemning law of God through the Gospel, it gives an adequate explanation of the statement of ver. 1. (2) The deliverance here spoken of is represented as one already accomplished: this is true of the believer's deliverance from the law through the Gospel, but is not true of his deliverance from indwelling corruption, which is a gradual process. The former, therefore, must give the true sense, the latter not. (3) The Gospel may justly be called "the law of the Spirit," as (in 2 Cor. iii. 8) "the ministration of the Spirit;" He being its author—while the law of God may be termed "the law of sin and death," as being productive of both, as the apostle himself says (chap. vii. 5, 13, etc.); and if this is correct, the subject of this and the immediately following verses will be seen to be not sanctification (as most critics suppose), but justification. These reasons, however, appear to us quite insufficient to justify so unnatural an interpretation. (1) The most plausible argument is that ver. 2 is intended to explain why there is no condemnation to believers; but the sense which such critics give to ver. 2 makes it no explanation, but a mere reiteration of the statement of ver. 1, only in another form. (2) The believer's deliverance from the dominion of indwelling sin through union to Christ is an accomplished fact, as much as his justification; and the gradual mortification of it in daily life, through the growing strength of the renewed principle, is quite consistent with this. (3) To make "the law of the Spirit

<sup>1</sup> The evidence against the genuineness of the words that follow, in the received text and A. V., is so strong that, on all the laws of textual evidence, they must be held to be no part of the original text. In this case they probably crept in from ver. 4, where they occur precisely as here, and no doubt they came to make the transition from the statement of ver. 1 to that of ver. 2 more easy. But they are far from improving the connection; for certainly the reason why there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ is not that they walk holily, though in point of fact they do so.

3 made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the

of life in Christ Jesus" mean simply *the Gospel*, is to put (as it appears to us) a strained, not to say a shallow, sense on so rich an expression; while to suppose that the apostle calls the holy law of God "the law of sin and death," is something repulsive. To use the words of *Fraser*, who, without knowing it, almost echoed the words of *Chrysostom* against some who before him had taken the same view of this verse (the passage will be found in 'Philippi,' p. 280), 'It were not consistent with the reverence due to the law of God, nor with the truth, to call it "the law of sin and death." Yea, it could not be so called but in plain contradiction to the vindication the apostle had made of it (chap. vii. 7), "Is the law *sin*? God forbid;" and ver. 13, "Was that which is good made death to me? God forbid."' No, it is the Holy Ghost who is here meant. And before we notice the import of the statement itself, it is important for the student of this Epistle to observe that *only once before has the Holy Ghost been expressly named in this Epistle* (in chap. v. 5), and that *only now and here does His Personal Agency in believers begin to be treated*. Little space, indeed, does that subject occupy. The formal treatment of it is limited to the *first twenty-six verses of this chapter*. But within this space some of the richest matter, dear to Christian experience, is compressed; and as almost every verse in this portion opens up some fresh view of the Spirit's work, the light which it throws upon this vital department of the work of redemption is out of all proportion to the space which it fills.

Let us now observe the import of this pregnant phrase, "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." He is called "the Spirit of *life*," as opening up in the souls of believers a fountain of spiritual life (see John vii. 38, 39); just as he is called "the Spirit of truth," as "guiding them into all truth" (John xvi. 13), and "the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. xi. 2), as the Inspirer of these qualities. And He is called "the Spirit of life *in Christ Jesus*," because it is as members of Christ that He takes up His abode in believers, who in consequence of this have one life with their Head. And as the word "*law*" here has, beyond all reasonable doubt, the same meaning as in chap. vii. 23—namely, 'an inward principle of action, operating with the fixedness and regularity of a law'—it thus appears that "*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*" here means, 'that new principle of action which the Spirit of Christ has opened up within us—the law of our new being.' This "*sets us free*," as soon as it takes possession of our inner man, "from the law of sin and death,"—from the enslaving power of that corrupt principle which carries death in its bosom. The "strong man armed" is overpowered by the "Stronger than he;" the weaker principle is dethroned and expelled by the more powerful; the principle of spiritual life prevails against and brings into captivity the principle of spiritual death—"leading captivity captive." If this now be the apostle's meaning, the "For," with which the verse opens, does not assign the *reason*, but supplies the *evidence* of what goes before (as in Luke vii. 47, and other places); in other words, the meaning is not, 'There is no condemnation to believers, *because* they have got the better of their inward corruption' (very different doctrine this, certainly, from the apostle's); but 'The triumph of believers over their inward corruption, through the power of Christ's Spirit in them, *proves* them to be in Christ Jesus, and as such absolved from condemnation.' This completely meets the only objection to our view of the verse which we think has any weight. But this is now to be explained more fully,



law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for

3. **For what the law could not do, etc.** 'Few texts (says *Fraser* truly) have been more teased with the criticisms of the learned, which do often tend rather to darken than to give light to it, or to the subject of it;' and *Fritzsche* refers to the exceeding difference that obtains among interpreters, both as to the structure of the verse and the explanation of its meaning. But this is hardly to be wondered at, considering the very unusual structure of the clause, and the equally unusual language of the entire statement. Let us examine it, clause by clause. What, then, was it that "the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh"? 'It could not *justify* the breakers of it,' say those who think that Justification is the subject of these verses. But it cannot be said with propriety that the reason why the law could not justify the guilty was that it was "weak through the flesh," or by reason of our corruption. It is clearly, we think, the law's inability to *free us from the dominion of sin* that the apostle has in view; as has partly appeared already (see on ver. 2), and will more fully appear presently. The law could irritate our sinful nature into more virulent action, as we have seen in chap. vii. 5; but it could not secure its own fulfilment. How that is accomplished comes now to be shown. **in that it was weak through the flesh**—not '*because of the flesh*,' as the English reader would suppose, but '*through the medium of the flesh*,' as the Greek preposition means; that is, having to address itself to us through a corrupt nature, too strong to be influenced by mere commands and threatenings. **God, etc.** The sentence is somewhat imperfect in its structure, which occasions a certain obscurity. It has been proposed to fill it up thus: 'What the law could not do . . . God [did by] sending,' etc. But it is as well to leave it without any supplement, understanding it to mean, that *whereas* the law was powerless to secure its own fulfilment—for the reason given—God took the method now to be described for attaining that end. **sending his own Son.** This and similar expressions most plainly imply (as *Meyer* properly notices) that Christ was God's "OWN SON" *before* He was sent—that is, in His own proper Person, and independently of His mission and appearance in the flesh (see on chap. viii. 32; Gal. iv. 4); and if so, He not only has the *very nature* of God, even as a son has his father's nature, but is essentially OF the Father, though in a sense too mysterious for any language of ours properly to define (see on chap. i. 4). But why is this peculiar relationship put forward here? To *enhance the greatness and define the nature* of the relief provided as coming from beyond the precincts of sinful humanity altogether, yea, *immediately from the Godhead itself, in the likeness of sinful flesh*—*Gr.* 'in the likeness of the flesh of sin,' a very remarkable and pregnant expression. 'It is not in the likeness of *flesh*'—for truly He "was made flesh" (John xi. 14)—but 'in the likeness of the flesh of *sin*,' in other words, He was made in the *reality* of our flesh, but not in the sinfulness of our flesh—only in the *likeness* of its sinful condition. He took our nature, not as Adam received it from his Maker's hand, but as it is in us—compassed with infirmities—with nothing to distinguish Him as man from sinful men, save that He was without sin. Nor does this mean that Christ took every property of Humanity save sin; for sin is *no property of Humanity at all*, but only the disordered state of our own souls, as the fallen family of Adam—a disorder affecting and overspreading our whole nature, indeed, but still purely *our own*. **and as an offering for sin**—*Gr.* 'and about sin.' Had this been a quite

4 sin, condemned sin in the flesh : that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh,

unusual expression, it might have meant simply, 'on the business of sin.' But since this very phrase is profusely employed in the LXX. to denote the Levitical 'offerings for sin' (nearly sixty times in the one Book of Leviticus), and since in that sense it is twice used in the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 6, 8)—in a quotation from Ps. xl.—we cannot reasonably doubt that this (which is the marginal reading of our own version) was the sense intended by the apostle, and that it would be so understood by all his readers who were familiar with the Greek of the Old Testament. The meaning, then, in this view of it, is that God accomplished what the law could not, by the mission of His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh ; yet not by His mere Incarnation, but by sending Him *in the character of a sin-offering* (compare, for the language, 2 Cor. v. 21—"He hath *made Him to be sin for us*"). Still, the question returns, What was it that God did by the mission of His Son as a sin-offering in our nature, when the law could not do it? The apostle's answer is, *He condemned sin in the flesh*—not in order to the *pardon* of it ; for justification, as we have seen, is not the thing here intended, but 'inflicted on it judicial vengeance in the flesh of Christ,' and so *condemned it to lose its hold over men*—at once to let go its iron grasp, and ultimately to be driven clean away from the domain of human nature in the redeemed. In this glorious sense our Lord says of His approaching death (John xii. 31), "Now is the *judgment* of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be *cast out*," and again (John xvi. 11), "When He (the Spirit) is come, He shall convince the world of . . . judgment, because the prince of this world is *judged*"—*i.e.*, condemned to let go his hold of men, who through the Cross shall be emancipated into *the liberty and power to be holy*. We may add to these expository remarks, that *Luther*—who seldom goes far wrong—has entirely missed the sense of the expression, "and for sin." Connecting it, not with the 'sending' of Christ, but with His 'condemning sin' when sent, he translates thus : He 'condemned sin in the flesh *through sin*,' which, if it be sense at all, yields only a bad sense.

4. *that the requirement* (or 'righteous demand') *of the law* (for that is the precise sense of this form of the word 'righteousness ;' see on chap. v. 16)—the practical obedience which the law calls for—*might be fulfilled in us*—might be *realized* in us. Calvin and others after him take this to mean, 'that the *justifying* righteousness of the law might be *imputed* to us ;' partly because they (some of them at least) take justification still to be the subject discoursed of ; partly because they hold it untrue that the righteousness of the law is any otherwise fulfilled in us ; and partly because they think that if our own personal obedience were meant, the second clause of the verse would be but a repetition of the first. But is it not unnatural to suppose that the apostle is still dwelling on justification, of which he had already treated so largely? And what is it that this conveys which had not been over and over again expressed, and, according to their own interpretation, once or twice said even in the preceding verses? Nor is it a wholesome thing, as we think, to be so very jealous of any expression that sounds like an assertion that believers fulfil the requirements of the law. For, do they not do so? And is it not the express object of chap. vi., in the first part of it, to *show* that they do, and in the second to bid believers accordingly *see* that they do? That their obedience is not *perfect* is no more a truth than that it is a *real*

5 but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace: 7 because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not 8 subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: so then

and *acceptable* obedience through Christ. (As to the use of the passive voice here, "might be fulfilled" in us, it seems far-fetched to infer that it is used 'to shew that the work is not ours, but God's, by His grace.') *who walk.* This is the most ancient of all expressions to denote 'the bent of one's life,' whether in the direction of good or of evil (see Gen. v. 24, vi. 9, xlviii. 15; Ps. i. 1; Isa. ii. 5; Mic. iv. 5; Mal. ii. 6; Luke i. 6; Eph. iv. 17; 1 John i. 6, 7). *not after* (according to the dictates of) *the flesh, but after the spirit.*

*Note.*—As it will be observed that we have printed the word "spirit" here with a small *s*, it may be proper to observe that in this and the following verses it is difficult to say whether by "the Spirit" as opposed to "the flesh" the apostle means *the Holy Spirit*, as the indwelling principle of the new life in believers, or *the renewed mind* itself, under the operation of that indwelling Spirit. Both are in active operation in every spiritual feeling and act. While the whole gracious frame and activity of the soul is due to the Holy Ghost as the indwelling Source of it—"the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (ver. 2)—the thing wrought is not wrought passively, mechanically, involuntarily in us, but is the spontaneous life and frame, emotions and actings, of *the renewed mind*. And from ver. 9, it would seem that what is more immediately intended by "the spirit" is *our own mind*, as renewed and actuated by the Holy Ghost.

5. *For they that are after* ('according to') *the flesh*—under the dominating influence of the fleshly principle, *do mind the things of the flesh*—give their engrossing attention to them: compare Phil. iii. 19, "who *mind* earthly things," and Matt. xvi. 23 (*Gr.*). Men must be under the predominating influence of one or other of these two principles, and, according as the one or the other has the mastery will be the complexion of their life, the character of their actions. Character is determined by the *bent* of our thoughts, feelings, and pursuits. 6. *For to have the mind of the flesh is death, but to have the mind of the spirit is life and peace.* The word means 'to be engrossed' (or 'taken up') with. It is the same word as a noun which in the foregoing verse is used as a verb 'to mind' the things of the flesh and the things of the spirit; and what the apostle here says is that 'to have the mind of the flesh' (or be bent on fleshly ends) not only terminates in death, but even now carries death in its bosom (see Eph. i. 1-5; 1 Tim. v. 6); whereas 'to have the mind of the spirit' (or be bent on spiritual ends) is not only "life" (in contrast with what the other is) but "peace"—the very element of the soul's deepest repose and true bliss. 7. *because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be:—*The pursuit of carnal ends is itself a state of enmity against God, being in direct violation of His commands; and in such a state of mind there is no subjection to the law of God, nor can there be.' 8. *and so they that are in the flesh cannot please God:—*Many things may be done by them which the law requires, but nothing either is or can be done *because* God's law requires it, or purely to

9 they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, 10 he is none of his. And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall

please God. The obediential principle being wanting, there is neither desire nor capacity to please God.

9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. This does not mean 'if you have spiritual inclinations or dispositions,' but 'if the Holy Ghost dwelleth in you' (see 1 Cor. vi. 11, 19, iii. 16, etc.). It thus appears that to be "in the spirit" means here, not to be under the power of God's Spirit, but to be under the dominion of *our own renewed mind*; for the indwelling of God's Spirit is 'given as the evidence that we are "in the spirit."' But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. It is as "the Spirit of Christ" that the Holy Ghost takes possession of believers, introducing into them all the gracious dove-like dispositions which dwell in Him (Matt. iii. 16; John iii. 34). Now if any man's heart is void, not of such dispositions, but of the blessed Author of them, "the Spirit of Christ," he is none of his—though intellectually convinced of the truth of Christianity, and even in a general sense influenced by its spirit. Sharp, solemn teaching this!

10. And if Christ is in you—by His indwelling Spirit, in virtue of which we have one life with Him. the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. Expositors are not quite agreed as to the precise import of this verse; but the following verse seems to fix the sense to the *mortality of the bodies* of believers—"If Christ is in you by His indwelling Spirit, though your "bodies" have to pass through the stage of "death," in consequence of the first Adam's "sin," your spirit is instinct with new and undying "life," brought in by the "righteousness" of the second Adam.'

*Note.*—Who can fail to see from this way of speaking of the Holy Ghost—called indiscriminately "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," and "Christ" Himself (as an indwelling life in believers)—that it admits of but one consistent explanation, namely, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are *Essentially One*, yet *Personally distinct*, in the One adorable Godhead? *Bengel*, who, as usual, notices this, refers his readers to the following passages, containing similarly striking collocations of the Persons of the Godhead, and of their respective offices: chap. v. 5, 8, xiv. 17, 18; xv. 16, 30; Mark xii. 36; John xv. 26; Acts ii. 33; 1 Cor. vi. 11, vers. 13, 19; 2 Cor. iii. 3; Gal. iv. 6; Eph. i. 17, ii. 18–22; Heb. ii. 3, 4; 1 Pet. i. 2.

11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you—"If He dwelleth in you as the Spirit of the Christ-raising One," or 'in all the *resurrection-power* which He put forth in raising Jesus,' he that raised up Christ Jesus (such is the true reading) from the dead. Observe here the significant change of name from JESUS, as the historical Individual whom God raised from the dead, to CHRIST, the same Individual considered as the Lord and Head of all His members, or of redeemed Humanity. 'Jesus (says *Bengel*) points to Himself; Christ to us: The one,

also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

- 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to  
13 live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the

as His proper name, relates to His Person; the other, as an appellative, to His office. 'shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you:—' Your bodies indeed are not exempt from the death which sin brought in, but your spirits even now have in them an undying life; and if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, even these bodies of yours, though they yield to the last enemy and the dust of them returns to the dust as it was, shall yet experience the same resurrection as that of their living Head, in virtue of the indwelling of the same Spirit in you that quickened Him.'

12. So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh:—'Emancipated from the tyrannous service of Sin into the service of Righteousness, we owe nothing now to the flesh; we disown its claims, and are deaf to its imperious demands.' Glorious truth! 13. for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die—*Gr.* 'are about to die.' The future here employed, as distinguished from the simple future, denotes an action either already begun or in immediate preparation; and if that shade of meaning was intended, the truth expressed will be, that a life of carnality is not only the sure prelude to the death that never dies (ver. 21), but is providing materials for it (see Gal. vi. 7, 8). But as only the simple future is used in the next and corresponding clause, but if by the spirit (or the Spirit)<sup>1</sup> ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live: perhaps only the *certainty* of the two issues was meant to be expressed. The apostle is not satisfied with assuring them that they are under no *obligations* to the flesh, to hearken to its suggestions, without reminding them where it will end if they do; and he uses the word "mortify" (put to death) as a kind of play upon the word "die" just before—*q. d.*, 'If ye do not kill sin, it will kill you.' But he tempers this by the bright alternative, that if through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the body, such a course will infallibly terminate in "life" everlasting. This leads the apostle into a new line of thought, opening into his final subject—the "glory" awaiting the justified believer. Before entering on this, however, there are three points in the verses just considered which should be impressed upon the mind of the reader.

*Notes.*—(1) No human refinement of the carnal mind will make it spiritual, or compensate for the absence of spirituality. "Flesh" and "spirit" are essentially and unchangeably opposed (not *physically*, however—as some dream—but *morally*); nor can the carnal mind, as such, be brought into real subjection to the law of God. Hence, (2) The estrangement between God and the sinner is mutual. For as the sinner's state of mind is "enmity against God" (ver. 7), so in this state he "cannot please God" (ver. 8). (3) While the consciousness of spiritual life in our renewed souls gives a glorious assurance of resurrection-life in the body also—in virtue of the same quickening Spirit whose inhabitation we already enjoy (ver. 11)—yet

<sup>1</sup> It is hardly possible to say in which shade of meaning the word "spirit" here is to be taken. What makes the former more probable is the form in which the clause is expressed in the Greek.

14 body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of  
 15 God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received  
 the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the  
 16 Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The

whatever professions of spiritual life men may make, it remains eternally true that "if we live after the flesh we shall die," and only "if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live" (compare with ver. 13, Gal. vi. 7, 8; Eph. v. 6; Phil. iii. 18, 19; 1 John iii. 7, 8).

14-27. *The sonship of believers, their future inheritance, and the Spirit's intercession for them.*

*The sonship of believers, and their inheritance as children.*—14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. Observe the new light in which the Spirit is here held forth. In the preceding verses He was spoken of simply as a *power* or *energy*, in virtue of which believers mortify sin: now the apostle holds Him forth in His Personal character, as a gracious, loving GUIDE, whose "leading"—enjoyed by all in whom is the Spirit of God's own dear Son—proves them also to be "sons of God." 15. For ye received not—that is, when ye believed—the spirit of bondage again (gendering) unto fear—as when "under the law" which "worketh wrath:"—'Before ye believed ye lived in legal bondage, haunted with incessant forebodings under a sense of unpardoned sin; but it was not to perpetuate that wretched state that ye received the Spirit:' but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry. The word "cry" is emphatic, expressing the spontaneousness, the strength, and the exuberance of the filial emotions. In Gal. iv. 6, this cry is said to proceed from *the Holy Spirit* in us, drawing forth this filial exclamation in our hearts: here, it is said to proceed from *our own hearts* under the vitalizing energy of the Spirit, as the very element of the new life in believers (see on ver. 4, and compare Matt. x. 19, 20). But why does the apostle employ two synonymous words, *Abba* and *Father*? "Abba" is the Aramaic or Syro-Chaldaic word for "Father;" and the Greek word for this is added, not surely to tell his readers that both mean the same thing, but for the same reason which drew both words from the lips of Christ Himself during His Agony in the Garden. He doubtless loved to utter His Father's name in both the accustomed forms, beginning with His cherished mother-tongue, and adding that of the learned; just as the Highlanders of Scotland, accustomed equally to Gaelic and English, do in their devotions pass naturally from the language of their childhood to that in which all their education had been received. In this view the use of both words here has a charming simplicity and warmth.

*Note.*—Two words are used in the N. T. to express the sonship of believers, according as the point in hand is their *adoption* into the family of God, or their being born into His family by *regeneration*. It is the former that is here intended, as the use of the word "adoption" plainly shews; and therefore the word is the general one, "*sons*," which might mean either. But in the next two verses the other word "*children*" is warily used, because, though an *adopted* son may inherit his father's property, that is the result of an arrangement by the father's free will. But since a *born* child is the *born heir* of his father's property, the apostle would have it understood that it is not by adoption but regeneration that believers are God's heirs.

Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the  
 17 children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God,  
 and joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with *him*,  
 18 that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that  
 the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy to be com-  
 19 *pared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the

16. **The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God.** It is one of the great gains of the Revised Version that it uses here not the neuter pronoun "itself" (as in the Authorised Version), but the masculine pronoun "Himself" of the Personal agency of the Holy Ghost in the souls of believers. In Greek the pronoun behaved to be neuter, because the word for "Spirit" is neuter ; but which of the two is to be used in English depends wholly on the nature of the thing spoken of ; and here notably, not only is it a Person who is the Agent, but the action—"bearing witness"—is strictly a personal one. But how is the double witness to our sonship borne ? The testimony of our own spirit is borne in that cry of *conscious sonship*, "Abba, Father ;" but it seems we are not therein alone, for the Holy Ghost within us—yea, even in that very cry which it is His to draw forth—sets His own distinct seal to ours ; and thus, "in the mouth of *two witnesses*," the thing is established.

*Note.*—The "spirit of bondage again unto fear"—which the apostle says "we received not" when first we came to know the Lord—is nevertheless that to which many Protestants are "all their lifetime subject ;" and the 'doubtful faith' which the Church of Rome systematically inculcates is strongly rebuked here, being in direct and painful contrast to that "spirit of adoption," and that witness of the Spirit to our sonship, along with our own spirit to the same truth, which it is here said that the children of God, as such, enjoy.

and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God—of our Father's kingdom : compare Gal. iv. 7, "and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ ;" and joint-heirs with Christ—as the "first-born among many brethren" (ver. 29), and as Himself "Heir of all things" (Heb. i. 2 ; compare Rev. iii. 21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to *sit with me in my throne*"). If so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified with *him*. This necessity of conformity to Christ in suffering, in order to participation in His glory, is taught alike by Christ Himself and by His apostles (John xii. 24-26 ; Matt. xvi. 24, 25 ; 2 Tim. ii. 12). 18. For I reckon (or 'judge')—an expression not of doubt but of reflection :—"For when I speak of our having to 'suffer with Christ,' I regard it as nothing." that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. The glory as here expressed is not so much the glorified condition of believers themselves as that which shall break upon them in the celestial state. The spirit of the whole statement may be thus conveyed : 'True, we must suffer with Christ, if we would partake of His glory ; but what of that ? For if such sufferings are set over against the coming glory, they sink into insignificance.'

*This suffering and expectant state of believers shared in by all creation* (19-23). Overpowered with a sense of the glory awaiting the joint-heirs with Christ, the apostle is not content with saying that "the sufferings of this present season are not worthy to be compared with" it ; but, seeing all reaction in sympathy with this double attitude of the Church—of suffering

earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to *wit*, the redemption of

and expectancy—he breaks forth here into a grand poetic picture of it. 19. **For the earnest expectation of the creation.** The word here used is exceedingly strong, denoting a continuous ‘watching,’ or ‘pursuing as with outstretched head’ (used nowhere else in the N. T. but in Phil. i. 20). **waiteth.** Here again the word is very strong—‘awaiteth with eagerness’ (ver. 23; Phil. iii. 20; Heb. ix. 28): **for the revelation of the sons of God**—when, by the redemption of their bodies from the grave, their now hidden sonship shall be revealed (as expressed in ver. 23). 20. **For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will**—through any natural principle of decay. The apostle, personifying creation, represents it as only submitting to the vanity with which it was smitten, on man’s account, in obedience to that superior power which had mysteriously linked its destinies with man’s. And so he adds, **but by reason of him who subjected it in hope;** 21. **because**—or, ‘by reason of him who subjected it in hope, that.’ As the words will bear either sense, interpreters are divided as to which shade of thought was intended. We prefer that of the A. V. “because.” Compare the same phrase “in hope” put absolutely, in Acts ii. 26; and in ver. 24 we shall find it in another but similar form. **the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption**—that is, from its bondage to the principle of decay, **into the liberty of the glory of the children of God**—meaning, into something of the same liberty which shall characterize the glorified state of the children of God themselves; in other words, the creation itself shall, in a glorious sense, be delivered into that same freedom from blight and debility, corruptibility and decay, in which the children of God, when raised up in glory, shall exult. 22. **For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in vain together until now.** 23. **And not only so, but ourselves also**—besides the inanimate creation, **which have the first-fruits of the Spirit**—meaning ‘the Spirit as the first-fruits’ of our full redemption (compare 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 13, iv. 30—where the meaning is not “by which ye are sealed,” as if the Spirit were the Author of the sealing, but “with which,” the Spirit being Himself the seal). The Spirit, given to believers as the “first-fruits” of what awaits them in glory, moulds the heart to a heavenly frame, and attempers it to its future element: **even we ourselves**—notwithstanding that we have the first-fruits of heaven already within us, **groan within ourselves**—both under that “body of sin and death” which we carry about with us, and under the manifold “vanity and vexation of spirit” that are written upon every object and every pursuit and every enjoyment under the sun; **waiting for** (see on ver. 19) **the adoption**—meaning the revelation or



24 our body. For we are saved by hope : but hope that is seen

manifestation of the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body—from the grave ; for (as *Bengel* notes) that is not called liberty by which we are delivered from the body, but by which the body itself is liberated from death.

Such seems to us the simplest and most natural interpretation of this noble passage. But it has been much controverted. No one passage, indeed, has given rise to more controversy, and whole treatises have been written to discuss and expound it. Though the interpretations put upon it have been many, they are all reducible to three : First, that “the whole creation” here means ‘the whole created universe,’ as the yearning of all creature-life after its destined perfection. But unless it be maintained that the whole created universe was “made subject to vanity” through the sin of man, which would be absurd, this interpretation must be rejected as a mere dream. Next, that “the creation” here means ‘the rational creation,’ or ‘mankind in general.’ But how could it be said that mankind in general were ‘unwillingly subjected to vanity,’ since in this very Epistle the sin that brought this vanity upon them is represented as *their own* (chap. v. 12) ; and how could it be said that the rational creation, or mankind in general, were ‘subjected to vanity, in hope of being delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God,’ or, finally, that they are now “groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting for the adoption,” etc. ? It remains, then, lastly, since “the creation” here cannot mean *Christians*—for in ver. 23 they and it are expressly distinguished from each other—that it must mean, ‘that creation which forms part of one system with man, yet exclusive of man himself.’ So (although with considerable diversity in minor particulars) the great majority of interpreters. If for man’s sake alone the earth was cursed, it cannot surprise us that it should share in his recovery. And if so, to represent it as sympathizing with man’s miseries, and as looking forward to his complete redemption as the period of its own emancipation from its present sin-blighted condition, is a beautiful thought, and in harmony with the general teaching of Scripture on the subject. (See 2 Pet. iii. 13.)

*Note.*—It is not when believers, through sinful ‘quenching of the Spirit,’ have the fewest and faintest glimpses of heaven that they sigh most fervently to be there ; but, on the contrary, when, through the unobstructed working of the Spirit in their hearts, “the first-fruits” of the glory to be revealed are most largely and frequently tasted, then, and just for that reason, is it that they “groan within themselves” for full redemption. For thus they reason : ‘If such be the drops, what will the ocean be ? If thus “to see through a glass darkly” be so very sweet, what will it be to “see face to face” ? If when “my Beloved stands behind our wall, looking forth at the windows, showing Himself through the lattice”—that thin, transparent veil which hides the unseen from mortal view—if, even thus, He is to me “Fairer than the children of men,” what shall He be when He stands confessed before my undazzled vision the Only-begotten of the Father in my own nature, and I shall be like Him, seeing Him as He is ?’

24. For in hope were we saved. The A. and R. Versions translate “by hope.” But this makes hope the instrument of salvation, which it can only be in a very indirect sense. The natural meaning of the clause is, that our salvation (in the perfective sense of the preceding verses) in the present state is matter of hope rather than of actual possession. But hope that is seen is not hope : when the thing hoped for becomes possession it ceases to

is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope 25 for? But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings

be hope. for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?<sup>1</sup>—for the one ends when the other begins. 25. But if we hope for what we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for it—patient waiting for it is then our fitting attitude.

*The Spirit's intercession for the saints* (26, 27).—26. And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity:<sup>2</sup>—I have already shewn you the varied offices of the blessed Spirit towards believers—how He descends into their souls as the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, making them members of Christ, and one life with their glorious Head; how in the power of this new life they are freed from the law of sin and death, walking henceforth not after the flesh but after the Spirit, minding supremely the things of the Spirit, and through the Spirit mortifying the deeds of the body; how He dwells in them as the Guide of the sons of God, as the Spirit of adoption teaches them to cry “Abba, Father,” witnesses with their spirit that they are children of God, and is in them as the first-fruits of their full redemption: but this is not all, for in like manner He “helpeth our infirmity;” not merely the one infirmity here specified, but the general ‘weakness of the spiritual life,’ of which the one example here given is sufficient: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. It is not the proper matter of prayer that believers are at so much loss about, for the fullest directions are given them on this head; but to ask for the right things “as we ought” is the difficulty. The apostle himself prayed thrice for what was not granted, there being a better thing in store for him. There must needs be much dimness in the spiritual vision of those who have to walk by faith, not by sight (1 Cor. xiii. 9; 2 Cor. v. 7); and in the best views and affections of our renewed nature there is ever a large admixture of the ideas and feelings which spring from the fleeting objects of sense, not to speak of the necessary imperfection of all human language as a vehicle for expressing the subtle spiritual feelings of the heart. In these circumstances, how can it be but that much uncertainty should surround all our spiritual exercises, and that in our nearest approaches, and in the freest outpourings of our hearts to our Father in heaven, doubts should spring up within us whether our *frame* of mind in such exercises is altogether befitting and well-pleasing to God? Nor do these anxieties subside, but rather deepen, with the depth and ripeness of our spiritual experience. but the Spirit himself (see, on the *personal* sense of the pronoun in such places, on ver. 16) maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered—expressed in articulate language. As we struggle to express the desires of our hearts, and find that our deepest emotions are the most inexpressible, we “groan” under this felt inability. But not in vain are these groanings. For “the Spirit Himself” is in them, giving to the emotions which Himself has kindled the only

<sup>1</sup> The reading of the R. V. here—“who hopeth for that which he seeth?”—seems less probable, on external as well as internal grounds.

<sup>2</sup> The singular, “infirmity,” is plainly the original reading here.

27 which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of*  
 28 God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according

language of which they are capable; so that though on our part they are the fruit of inability to utter what we feel, they are at the same time the intercession of the Spirit Himself in our behalf.' 27. and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will* (or 'mind') of God. As the Searcher of hearts, He watches the surging emotions of them in prayer, and knows perfectly what the Spirit means by the groanings which He draws forth within us, because that blessed Intercessor pleads by them only for what God Himself designs to bestow.

*Note.*—What a view is here given of the relations subsisting between the Divine Persons in the economy of redemption and the harmony of their respective operations in the case of each of the redeemed!

28-39. *Triumphant summary of the whole argument.* In this incomparable section the apostle expatiates over the whole field of his preceding argument, his spirit swelling and soaring with his vast and lofty theme, and carrying his readers along with him, out of all the trials and tears and uncertainties of things present, into the region of cloudless and eternal day. To subdivide this section would be intolerable; for though between vers. 30 and 31 the apostle seems to draw his breath, so to speak, his thoughts thenceforward rush along like a cataract, and refuse to be arrested by any artificial breaks.

28. And we know that to them that love God, all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose. Two characteristics of believers are here given—one descriptive of *their* feeling towards God, the other of *His* feeling towards them; and each of these is selected with the evident view of suggesting the true explanation of the delightful assurance here conveyed, that all things are, and cannot but be, co-operating for good to such. Let us look at each of them, for it will be found that there is a glorious consistency between the eternal purposes of God and the free agency of men, though the link of connection is beyond human—probably even created—apprehension. First, 'To them that love God all things are working together for good.' For, persuaded that He who gave His own Son for them cannot but mean them well in all His procedure, they fall naturally and sweetly in with it; and thus learning to take in good part whatever He sends to them, however trying to flesh and blood, they render it impossible—so to speak—that it should do other than minister to their good. But, again, "To them that are called according to His purpose all things are"—in the same intelligible way—"working together for good." Because, believing that there *is* such an eternal purpose, within the cloud of whose glory the humblest believer is enwrapt, they see "His chariot paved with love;" and knowing that it is in pursuance of this purpose of love that they have been "called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 9), they naturally say within themselves, 'It cannot be that He "of Whom, and through Whom, and to Whom are all things," should suffer that purpose to be thwarted by anything really adverse to us, or that He should not make all things—dark as well as light, crooked as well as straight—to co-operate to the

29 to *his* purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he 30 might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover,

furtherance and final completion of His high design. And this the apostle says, "We know." It was a household word with the household of faith: not that, *as here exhibited*, it had perhaps ever before struck one of his readers; but as already observed, with the teaching they had already received and the Christian experience which was common to all who had tasted that the Lord was gracious, it had but to be put before them to be at once recognised as an undoubted and precious truth.

29. For whom he doth foreknow, he also foreordaineth.<sup>1</sup> In what sense are we to take the word "foreknow" here? 'Those who He foreknew would repent and believe,' say *Pelagians* of every age and every hue. But this is to thrust into the text what is contrary to the whole spirit and even letter of the apostle's teaching. In such passages as chap. xi. 2, Ps. i. 6, Jer. i. 5, Amos iii. 2, Hos. xiii. 5, Gal. iv. 5, God's "knowledge" of His people cannot be restricted to a mere foresight of future events, or acquaintance with what is passing here below. Does "whom He did foreknow," then, mean 'whom He foreordained'? That can hardly be, since both words are here used, and the thing meant by the one is spoken of as the *cause* of what is intended by the other. It is difficult, indeed, for our limited minds to distinguish them as states of the Divine Mind towards men, especially since, in Acts ii. 23, "the counsel" is put *before* "the foreknowledge of God," while in I Pet. i. 2 "election" is said to be "*according to* the foreknowledge of God." But probably God's "foreknowledge" of His own people means His *peculiar, gracious complacency in them*, while His "predestinating" or "foreordaining" them signifies His fixed *purpose*, flowing from this, to "save them and call them with a holy calling" (2 Tim. i. 9). Doubtless in this knowledge of them He beholds them in all that they ever will be as His; but all this is His own creation in them, according to Pauline teaching. **to be conformed to the image of his Son**—to be sons, that is, after the pattern or model of *His* Sonship in our nature, **that he might be the first-born among many brethren**—the First-born being the Son by nature, His "manybrethren" sons by adoption: He, in the Humanity of the Only-begotten of the Father, bearing our sins on the accursed tree; they in that of men ready to perish, but redeemed from condemnation and wrath, and transformed into his likeness: He "the First-born from the dead;" they "that sleep in Jesus," to be in due time "brought with Him;" "The First-born," already "crowned with glory and honour;" His "many brethren," "when He shall appear, to be like Him, for they shall see Him as he is." 30. **and whom he foreordaineth, them he also calleth**. This word, according to Pauline usage, never means the mere outward call of the Gospel, addressed to all who hear

<sup>1</sup> The tense employed in the five verbs used in this and the following verse is the *aorist*, which when it expresses 'a principle' or 'law of action' is best expressed in English by the *present tense*. Thus, in Jas. i. 11, "The sun *aristeth* . . . and *withereth* the grass;" and the flower *falleth*, and the grace of the fashion of it *perisheth*." In all these four verbs, the aorist is the tense used, not the present; but were the aorist or preterite tense to be retained in English, every one must see that the intended idea would be lost upon the English ear. So in John xv. 6 ("is cast forth, and is withered"—not "*was*"); and so in other places. On this principle we venture to translate, as we doubt not the meaning here is, "Whom He doth foreknow, He also foreordaineth," etc.

whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for 32 us, who *can be* against us? He that spared not his own

it; for "many are called" in this sense who are not "chosen" (Matt. xxii. 14): it always means 'internally, efficaciously, savingly called,' and expresses the first step in the process of personal salvation. **and whom he calleth, them he also justifieth**—in the way so fully described in the preceding chapters: **and whom he justifieth, them he also glorifieth** (see on vers. 17, 18). Noble climax, and how rhythmically expressed! The whole process of salvation is viewed as one Divine idea in the Divine mind, that of bringing men into conformity with the image of His Son, as the First-born of a family of God, but realized in successive stages onwards to eternal glory.

31. What shall we then say to these things? As *Bengel* says, with his own unrivalled terseness, 'We can no further go, think, wish.' This whole passage, in fact—on to ver. 34, and even to the end of the chapter—strikes all thoughtful interpreters and readers as transcending almost everything in language. Well might *Olshausen* speak of the 'profound and colossal' character of the thought. If God is for us, who *can be* against us? If God is *resolved* and *engaged* to bring us through, all our enemies must be *His*; and "Who would set the briers and thorns against Him in battle? He would go through them, He would burn them together" (Isa. xxvii. 4). What strong consolation is here! Nay, but the great pledge of all has already been given. For, 32. **He**—rather, 'He, surely.' It is a pity to lose the emphatic particle of the original, when it can be expressed idiomatically (as it cannot always be) in our own language. *Bengel* notices that full sweetness of exultation which this little particle here conveys. **that spared not his own Son**—'withheld not,' or 'kept not back His own (proper) Son.' Both of these most expressive phrases, as well as the entire thought, were suggested by Gen. xxii. 22 (as in the LXX.), where Jehovah's touching commendation of Abraham's conduct is designed to furnish something like a glimpse into the spirit of His own act in *surrendering* His own Son. "Take now (said the Lord to Abraham) thy son, [thine *only*, whom thou lovest, and . . . offer him for a burnt-offering" (Gen. xxii. 2); and only when Abraham had all but performed that loftiest act of self-sacrifice, did the Lord interpose, saying, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou HAST NOT WITHHELD THY SON, THINE ONLY SON, from me." In the light of this incident, then, and of this language, our apostle can mean to convey nothing less than this, that in "not sparing His own Son, but delivering Him up," or surrendering Him, God exercised, in His *Paternal* character, a mysterious act of *Self-sacrifice*, which, though involving none of the *pain* and none of the *loss* which are inseparable from the very idea of self-sacrifice on our part, was not less real, but, on the contrary, as far transcended any such acts of ours as His nature is above the creature's. But this is inconceivable if Christ be not God's "own (or 'proper') Son," partaker of His very nature, as really as Isaac was of his father Abraham's. It was in that sense, undoubtedly, that the Jews charged our Lord with making Himself "equal with God" (John v. 18)—a charge which He in reply forthwith

Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with  
 33 him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any  
 thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth;  
 34 who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea  
 rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of

proceeded, not to disown, but to illustrate and confirm. Understand Christ's Sonship thus, and the language of Scripture regarding it is intelligible and harmonious; but take it to be an *artificial* relationship, ascribed to Him in virtue either of His miraculous birth or His resurrection from the dead, or the grandeur of His works, or all of these together—and the passages which speak of it neither explain themselves nor harmonize with each other. **but delivered him up**—not to *death* merely (as many take it), for that is too narrow an idea here, but 'surrendered Him,' in the most comprehensive sense: cf. John iii. 16, "God so loved the world that He **GAVE** His only-begotten Son." **for us all**—all those of vers. 28-30, as is plain enough. **how shall he not**—'how can we conceive that He should not **also** (along) **with him** freely give us all things?'—all other gifts being not only immeasurably *less* than this gift of gifts, but virtually wrapt up in it. 33. **Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?** **It is** God that justifieth; **who is he that condemneth?**<sup>1</sup> 34. **It is** Christ Jesus<sup>2</sup> that died. A number of expositors read this as a question: "God that justifieth?" (Will *He* bring a charge against His own elect?) "Who is he that condemneth? Christ that died?" (Will *He* condemn them?) But besides that this 'creates an unnatural accumulation of questions, it is intolerable; for God is thus represented as the Judge; but it is the part of a judge not to accuse, but either to acquit or condemn the accused.<sup>3</sup> Such an idea is against all Scripture analogy, and could never come into the apostle's mind—that after he had spoken of God's being so for us that none can be against us, and His giving such a Gift as secures every other, and having on the ground of this challenged *any* to criminate God's elect—he should turn round and ask, if "God that justified" would at the same time criminate them, or "Christ that died" for them would at the same time "condemn" them. Plainly, it is to *creatures* only that he throws down the challenge, asking which of *them* would dare to bring a charge against those whom God has justified—would condemn those for whom Christ died. **yea, rather, that is risen again**<sup>3</sup>—to make good the purposes of His death. Here, as in some other cases, the apostle delightfully corrects himself (see on chap. i. 12, and Gal. iv. 9), not meaning that the resurrection of Christ is of more saving value than His death (for if He "died for our sins, He was raised again for our justification"); but that it is more delightful to think of Him as now "alive for evermore" to see to the efficacy of His death in our behalf. **who is**<sup>4</sup> **at the right hand of God.** The right hand of the king was anciently the seat of honour (1 Sam. xx. 25; 1 Kings ii. 19; Ps. xlv. 9), and denoted *participation in the royal power and*

<sup>1</sup> It is better to read here the present than the future participle of the Greek (as in the R. V. "who is he that shall condemn").

<sup>2</sup> This seems the true reading here—perhaps with reference to the following words, "that died;" compare Matt. i. 21, "Thou shalt call His name *Jesus*, for He shall save His people from their sin."

<sup>3</sup> The R. V. reads, "that was raised from the dead," but on insufficient authority, as we judge.

<sup>4</sup> The "even" here is probably not genuine.

- 35 God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or  
 36 persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? as it is written,

*glory* (Matt. xx. 21). The classical writings have familiarized us with the same idea. Accordingly, Christ's sitting at the right hand of God—predicted in Ps. cx. 1, and historically referred to in Mark xvi. 19; Acts ii. 33, vii. 56; Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Rev. iii. 21—signifies the *glory* of the exalted Son of man, and the Divine *power* in the government of the world in which He participates. Hence it is called "sitting on the right hand of *Power*" (Matt. xxvi. 64), and "sitting on the right hand of the *Majesty* on high" (Heb. i. 3). **who also maketh intercession for us**—using all His boundless *interest* with God in our behalf. 'His session (says *Bengel*) denotes His *power* to save us; His intercession, His *will* to do it.' But how are we to conceive of this intercession? Not as of one pleading 'on bended knees and with outstretched arms,' to use the expressive language of *Calvin*. But yet, neither is it merely a figurative intimation that the power of Christ's redemption is continually operative, nor only to shew the fervour and vehemence of His love for us: it cannot be taken to mean less than this, that the glorified Redeemer, conscious of His claims, expressly *signifies His will* that the efficacy of His death should be made good to the uttermost, and signifies it in some such royal style as we find Him employing in that wonderful Intercessory Prayer which he spoke *as from within the veil* (see John xvii. 11, 12): "Father, I WILL that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am." But *in what form* this will is expressed is as undiscoverable as it is unimportant.

*Notes.*—(1) If there could be any doubt as to the meaning of the all-important word "JUSTIFICATION," in this Epistle—whether it means, as the Church of Rome teaches and many others affirm, '*infusing* righteousness into the unholy, so as to *make* them righteous,' or, according to Protestant teaching, '*absolving, acquitting, or pronouncing* righteous the guilty'—ver. 33 ought to set such doubt entirely at rest. For the apostle's question in this verse is, "Who shall *bring a charge against* God's elect?"—in other words, 'Who shall *pronounce*' or '*hold them guilty*?' seeing that "God *justifies*" them: shewing, beyond all doubt, that to "justify" was intended to express precisely the opposite of 'holding guilty'; and consequently (as *Calvin* triumphantly argues) that it means '*to absolve from the charge of guilt.*' (2) After the same unanswerable mode of reasoning, we are entitled to argue that if there could be any reasonable doubt in what light the *death* of Christ is to be regarded in this Epistle, ver. 34 ought to set that doubt entirely at rest. For there the apostle's question is, Who shall "*condemn*" God's elect, since "Christ *died*" for them? shewing beyond all doubt (as *Philippi* justly argues) that it was the *expiatory* character of that death which the apostle had in view.

35. **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** This does not mean 'our love to Christ,' as if one should say, Who shall hinder us from loving Christ? but 'Christ's love to us,' as is clear from the closing words of the chapter, which refer to the same subject. Nor would the other sense harmonize with the scope of the chapter, which is to exhibit the ample ground that there is for the believer's confidence in Christ. *shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

For thy sake we are killed all the day long ;  
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through  
38 him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death,  
nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things  
39 present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any  
other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of  
God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—for none of these, nor all of them together, how terrible soever to the flesh, are tokens of God's wrath, or the least ground for doubt of His love. And from whom could such a question come better than from one who had himself for Christ's sake endured so much? (See 2 Cor. xi. 21–33; 1 Cor. iv. 10–13.) Calvin (says *Tholuck*) makes the noble reflection, that the apostle says not 'What,' but "Who,"—just as if all creatures, and all afflictions, were so many gladiators taking arms against the Christians. 36. even as it is written (Ps. xlv. 22), *For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* This is quoted as descriptive of what God's faithful people may expect from their enemies at *any period* when their hatred of righteousness is roused, and there is nothing to restrain it (see Gal. iv. 29). 37. *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.* So far are they from 'separating us from Christ's love, that it is just "through Him that loved us" that we are victorious over them.' What an affecting view of the love of Christ does it give us to learn, that His greatest *nearness* to God and most powerful *interest* with Him—as "seated on His right hand"—is employed in behalf of His people here below! and what everlasting consolation and good hope through grace arise from the fact—as variously as it is grandly expressed in this section—that all that *can* help us is on the side of those who are Christ's, and all that *can* hurt us is a conquered foe! 38. *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,<sup>1</sup> nor things present, nor things to come—no condition of the present life, and none of the possibilities of the life to come. 39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature (or 'created thing'), any other thing in the whole created universe. 'All the terms here (as *Olshausen* says) are to be taken in their most general sense, and need no closer definition. The indefinite expressions are meant to denote all that can be thought of, and are only a rhetorical paraphrase of the conception of *allness*.' shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Thus does this wonderful chapter, with which the argument of the Epistle properly closes, leave us who are "justified by faith," in the arms of everlasting Love, whence no hostile power or conceivable event can ever tear us. "Behold what manner of love is this!" And "what manner of persons" ought "God's elect"

<sup>1</sup> The clause "nor powers"—if we are to be guided by *external* authorities alone—ought certainly to stand, not here, but at the close of the verse, which will then read thus: "nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers." But who can bring himself to believe that the apostle so wrote—that one of the harshest and baldest collocations of the conceivable enemies of believers was placed there by one who has here drawn up a catalogue otherwise perfect? How to account for this arrangement having found its way into so many MSS., may be very difficult to say; but in the meantime we must hold the received order of the clauses as that of the apostle himself.



to be, who are thus "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ"—*in humility*, when they remember that He "hath saved them and called them, not according to their works, but according to His own purpose and grace, given them in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. i. 9); in *thankfulness*, for "Who maketh thee to differ, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. iv. 7); in *godly jealousy* over themselves, remembering that "God is not mocked," but "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7); in "*diligence* to make our calling and election sure" (2 Pet. i. 10); and yet in *calm confidence*, that "whom God predestinates, and calls, and justifies, them (in due time) He also glorifies" (chap. viii. 30)?

## CHAPTER IX.—XI.—THE BEARING OF THE FOREGOING TRUTHS UPON THE CONDITION AND DESTINY OF THE CHOSEN PEOPLE, THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION, AND THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES.

CHAP. IX. 1 I SAY the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience  
2 also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great

In opening up so thoroughly the way of Salvation by Grace—alike for Jew and Gentile—through Faith alone in the Lord Jesus, the far-reaching mind of our apostle could not fail to perceive that he was raising questions of a profound and delicate nature—as to God's elect nation which had rejected Christ, as to the promises made to them, and what was to become of them; also, whether all distinction of Jew and Gentile was now at an end, and if not, what might be its precise nature and future development. In preaching, or in less elaborate Epistles, a glance at the principles involved in these questions might be sufficient. But this great Epistle afforded just the appropriate occasion for handling them thoroughly and once for all; which, accordingly, he now proceeds to do—in three chapters, as remarkable for profundity and reach as any of the preceding ones.

THE TRUE ISRAEL HAS NOT BEEN REJECTED—HOW ISRAEL AFTER THE FLESH HAS FALLEN—AND HOW, IN THE CASE OF BOTH, AND IN THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES, THE WORD OF GOD HAS TAKEN EFFECT (CHAP. IX.).

### 1-5. *Introduction to this topic.*

Too well aware that he was regarded as a traitor to the dearest interests of his people (Acts xxi. 33; xxii. 22; xxv. 24), the apostle opens this division of his subject by giving vent to his real feelings with extraordinary vehemence of protestation. 1. **I say the truth in Christ**—as if steeped in the spirit of Him who wept over impenitent and doomed Jerusalem (compare chap. i. 9; 2 Cor. xii. 19; Phil. i. 8), **I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost**—'my conscience as quickened, illuminated, and even now under the direct operation of the Holy Ghost.' Doubtless the apostle could speak thus as no uninspired Christian can. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that to speak and act "in Christ," with a

- 3 heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren,  
 4 my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to

conscience not only illuminated but under the present operation of the Holy Ghost, is not peculiar to the supernaturally inspired, but is the privilege and ought to be the aim of every believer. 2. **That I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart**—the bitter hostility of his nation to the glorious Gospel, and the awful consequences of their unbelief, weighing heavily and incessantly upon his spirit. The grace which revolutionized the apostle's religious views and feelings did not destroy, but only intensified and elevated his natural feelings. 3. **For I could wish that I myself were anathema ('accursed') from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh.** In proportion as he felt himself spiritually severed from his nation, he seems to have realized all the more vividly his natural relationship to them. Some interpreters, deeming such a wish as is here expressed to be too strong for any Christian to utter, or even conceive, have rendered the opening words, 'I did (once) wish;' understanding it of his former unconverted state. The Old Latin version and the Vulgate revision of it led the way in this wrong direction (*optabam*), and *Pelagius* followed. Even *Luther* fell into this mistake (*Ich habe gewünscht*). But what sense or force does this interpretation yield? When a virulent persecutor of Christians, the apostle certainly had no desire for any connection with Christ, and wished the very name of Christ to perish. But can that be all that is here meant? or even if it were, would the apostle have expressed it in the terms here employed—that he wished, not Christ and Christians accursed, but himself accursed from Christ, and this not for the truth's sake, but for his brethren's sake? It is true that the verb is in the past (the imperfect) tense. But according to the Greek idiom, the strict meaning of the phrase is, 'I was going to wish, and should have wished, had that been lawful, or could it have done any good' (or, according to the English idiom), 'I could have wished.' (Compare the analogous use of the imperfect in Acts xxv. 22, and Gal. iv. 20.) Much also has been written on the word "accursed"—to soften its apparent harshness, and represent it as meant only in a modified sense. But if we view the entire sentiment as a vehement or passionate expression of *the absorption of his whole being* in the salvation of his people, the difficulty will vanish; and instead of applying to this burst of emotion the cold criticism which would be applicable to definite ideas, we shall rather be reminded of the nearly identical wish so nobly expressed by Moses, Ex. xxxii. 32, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin . . . : and if *not*, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." This is what *Bacon* (quoted by *Wordsworth*) calls 'an ecstasy of charity and infinite feeling of communion' (*Advancement of Learning*).

4. **who ('seeing that they are,' as in i. 25, "for that;" ii. 15, "in that") are Israelites, etc.**—'And well may I feel thus towards a people so illustrious for all that can ennoble a people—in their origin, their calling, the exalted trusts committed to them, and that debt of all debts which the world shall for ever owe them, the Birth of its Redeemer from them.' "Who are *Israelites*"—the descendants of him who "had power with God and prevailed," and whose family name "Jacob" was changed into "Israel" (or 'Prince of God'), to hand down through all time this pre-eminent feature in his character (Gen. xxxii. 28). What store the apostle set by this title, as one which he could and did claim, as justly as any of those from whom he was

whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God,

now separated in faith, may be seen from chap. xi. 1; 2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil. iii. 5. *whose is the adoption.* This is not to be confounded with the internal, spiritual, vital 'adoption' which flows from union to God's own Son, and which is the counterpart of regeneration. It was a purely external and theocratic, *yet real*, adoption, separating them by a sovereign act of grace from the surrounding heathenism, and constituting them a *Family of God*. 'See Ex. iv. 22; Deut. xiv. 1, xxxii. 6; Isa. i. 2; Jer. iii. 4, xxxi. 9; Hos. xi. 1; Mal. i. 6.) The higher adoption in Christ Jesus is (as *Meyer* says) but the antitype and completion of this. To belong to the visible Church of God, and enjoy its high and holy distinctions, is of the sovereign mercy of God, and should be regarded with devout thankfulness; and yet the rich enumeration of these, as attaching to a nation, at that very time excluding themselves by unbelief from the spiritual and eternal significance of them all, should warn us that the most sacred external distinctions and privileges will avail nothing to salvation without the heart's submission to the righteousness of God (vers. 31-33). *and the glory.* This is not to be taken in the loose sense which many interpreters give it—the *glorious* height of privilege, etc., to which they were raised; nor yet 'the ark of the covenant,' whose capture by the Philistines was felt by the dying wife of Phinehas to be "the departure of the glory" (1 Sam. iv. 21). With the great majority of good interpreters, we take it to mean that 'glory of the Lord'—or 'visible token of the Divine presence in the midst of them'—which rested on the ark and filled the tabernacle during all their wanderings in the wilderness; which in Jerusalem continued to be seen in the tabernacle and temple, and which only disappeared when, at the Captivity, the temple was demolished, and the sun of the ancient economy began to go down. The later Jews gave to this glory the now familiar name of the '*Shechinah*' [from the verb 'to let one's self down,' and hence 'to dwell']. See John i. 14; also Acts vii. 1; 2 Cor. iii. 7, where "the *glory* of his (Moses') countenance" means the visible radiance which his *nearness to God* in the mount left upon his face; and Heb. ix. 5, where "the cherubim of *glory* shadowing the mercy-seat" are so called, to express the radiance which overspread the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, symbolical of the mutual *nearness of God and His people* through the efficacy of an atoning sacrifice. It was the distinguishing honour of the Israelites that to them only was the whole method of Redemption and the result of it in "the Lord God dwelling among them" (Ps. lxxviii. 18), disclosed in type; and thus to them pertained "the glory," *and the covenants*. The word is here used in the plural number, not to denote 'the old and the new covenants,' for all the things here enumerated belong to the ancient economy; nor 'the tables of the covenant,' for that would be to make it the same with the next particular, "the giving of the law;" but the *one covenant* with Abraham *in its successive renewals*, to which the Gentiles were "strangers," and which is called (also in the plural) "the covenants of promise" (Eph. ii. 12). See also Gal. iii. 16, 17. *and the giving of the law*—from Mount Sinai, and entrusting that precious treasure to their safe keeping, which the Jews justly regarded as their peculiar honour (chap. ii. 17, iii. 2; Deut. xxvi. 18, 19; Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20). *and the service of God*—or simply, "the service," meaning the whole divinely-instituted religious service, in the celebration of which they were brought so nigh to God. *and the promises*—the

5 and the promises; whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

great Abrahamic promises, successively unfolded, and which had their fulfilment only in Christ (see Heb. vii. 6; Gal. iii. 16, 21; Acts xxvi. 6, 7). 5. *Whose are the fathers*—here probably the three great fathers of the covenant—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—by whom God condescended to name Himself (Ex. iii. 6, 13; Luke xx. 37). and (most exalted privilege of all, and as such reserved to the last) of *whom as concerning the flesh* (see on chap. i. 3) *Christ came*—or, ‘of whom is Christ, as concerning the flesh,’ *who is over all, God*—or, ‘God over all,’ *blessed for ever. Amen.* The reference of these remarkable words to the supreme Divinity of Christ seems so obvious, that those who dispute this adopt various expedients to give another turn to the clause. (1) *Erasmus* suggested that a period might be placed after ‘of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh;’ in which case what follows is a doxology to the Father for such a gift—‘He who is over all, God, be blessed for ever.’ But there are two objections to this: First, That everywhere in Scripture (both in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, and in the Greek of the New) the word “blessed” *precedes* the name of God, on whom the blessing is pronounced—thus, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel” (Ps. lxxii. 18, and Luke i. 68); “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. i. 3, and Eph. i. 3). Even *Socinus* admitted this to be a valid objection, and it seems to us fatal. But further, when the apostle here says of Christ that He came of the Israelites “*as concerning the flesh*,” we naturally expect, according to his usual style of thought, that the next clause will make some reference to His higher nature. This accordingly he does sublimely, according to the received punctuation of this verse, and the almost universal way of translating and understanding it; but if we adopt the above suggestion of *Erasmus*—putting a period after ‘of whom is Christ according to the flesh’—the statement ends with an abruptness and the thought is broken in a way not usual, certainly, with the apostle. (2) Another expedient, also suggested by *Erasmus*, was to place a period after the words “over all” (of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is “over all”). In this case these words are indeed made to refer to Christ, but only in this sense, that Christ is “over all” that came before Him; and what follows is a doxology, as before, to God the Father—‘God be blessed for ever.’ But though this does yield a sort of contrast in Christ to His descent from Israel “according to the flesh,” it is surely a poor one; the doxology which it yields is (as *Meyer* truly says) miserably abrupt; and it has the same fatal objection as the former—the wrong placing of the word “blessed.” It is a valid objection also to this punctuation, that in that case the word “God” would have required the Greek article.

Failing these two expedients, a conjectural change of the text has been resorted to—that the two Greek words should be transposed, and both the accent and breathing of the latter word changed, making the sense to be ‘whose is the Supreme God’—that is, not only does Christ, as concerning the flesh, belong to the Israelites, but theirs also is the God over all. But besides the worthlessness of the conjecture itself, conjectural emendations of the text—in the face of all manuscript authority—are now justly banished from the domain of sound criticism.

It remains, then, that we have here no doxology at all, but a naked state-

- 6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.  
 7 For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children:  
 8 but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of

ment of fact—that while Christ is “of” the Israelitish nation, “*as concerning the flesh*,” He is *in another respect* “God over all, blessed for ever.” (In 2 Cor. xi. 31, the very Greek phrase which is here rendered “who is,” is used in the same sense; and compare the Greek of chap. i. 25.)

6-13. *Though Israel after the flesh has fallen, the Elect Israel has not failed.*

Lest his readers should conclude, from the melancholy strain of the preceding verses, that that Israel which he had represented as so dear to God, and the object of so many promises, had quite failed, the apostle now proceeds to open up an entirely new feature of his subject, which, though implied in all he had written and indirectly hinted at once and again, had not before been formally expounded—the distinction between the nominal and the *real*, the *carnal* and the *spiritual* Israel. 6. *But it is not as though the word of God hath come to nought. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:*—‘Think not that I mourn over the total loss of Israel, for that would involve the failure of God’s word to Abraham; but not all that belong to the natural seed, and go under the name of “Israel,” *are the* Israel of God’s irrevocable choice.’ The difficulties which encompass this profound subject of ELECTION lie not in the apostle’s teaching, which is plain enough, but in the truths themselves, the evidence for which, viewed by themselves, is overwhelming, but whose perfect harmony with other truths is beyond human, perhaps even finite, comprehension. The great source of error here lies, as we humbly conceive, in hastily inferring, as too many critics do—from the apostle’s taking up, at the close of this chapter, the calling of the Gentiles in connection with the rejection of Israel, and continuing this subject through the two next chapters—that the Election treated of in the body of this chapter is *national*, not *personal* Election, and consequently is Election merely to *religious advantages*, not to *eternal salvation*. In that case, the argument of ver. 6, with which the subject of Election opens, would be this: ‘The choice of Abraham and his seed has not failed; because though Israel has been rejected, *the Gentiles* have taken their place; and God has a right to choose what nation He will to the privileges of His visible kingdom.’ But so far from this, the Gentiles are not so much as mentioned at all till towards the close of the chapter; and the argument of this verse is, that ‘*all of Israel itself* is not rejected, but *only a portion of it*, the remainder being *the* “Israel” whom God has chosen in the exercise of His sovereign right.’ And that this is a choice not to mere external privileges, but to eternal salvation, will abundantly appear from what follows.

7. *neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children:*—‘Not in the line of mere fleshly descent from Abraham does the election run; else Ishmael, Hagar’s child, and even Keturah’s children, would be included, which they were not.’ but—as the promise runs, *In Isaac shall thy seed be called* (Gen. xxi. 12). ‘On this principle, the true Election consists of such of Abraham’s seed as God hath unconditionally chosen.’ 8. *That is, It is not the children of the flesh that are children*

God: but the children of the promise are counted for the  
 9 seed. For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will  
 10 I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only *this*;  
 but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our  
 11 father Isaac; (for *the children* being not yet born, neither  
 having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God  
 according to election might stand, not of works, but of him  
 12 that calleth;) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the  
 13 younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau  
 have I hated.

of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for the seed. 9. For this is the word of promise, etc. 10. And not only so, but Rebecca also having conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac; 11. (for *the children* being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12. it was said unto her (even before their birth), The elder shall serve the younger. 13. Even as it is written (Mal. i. 2, 3), Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. The strong terms "loved" and "hated," here applied to the choice of Jacob and rejection of Esau, are to be interpreted according to the current use of Scripture language in such cases. Thus, whereas Leah complains that she was "hated" by her husband (Gen. xxix. 33), and that "the Lord saw that she was hated" (ver. 31), yet in the immediately preceding verse (30) we have the true explanation, that Jacob "loved Rachel more than Leah." And when our Lord says, "If any man come to me and *hate* not his father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26), we have the true explanation in a subsequent verse (33), "Whosoever he be of you that *renounceth* not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

It might be thought that there was a natural reason for preferring the child of Sarah as being Abraham's true and first wife, both to the child of Hagar, Sarah's maid, and to the children of Keturah, his second wife. But there could be no such reason in the case of Rebecca, Isaac's only wife; for the choice of her son Jacob was the choice of one of two sons by the same mother, and of the younger in preference to the elder, and before either of them was born, and consequently before either had done good or evil to be a ground of preference; and all to shew that the sole ground of distinction lay in the unconditional choice of God—"not of works, but of Him that calleth." These last words shew conclusively the erroneousness of the theory by which some get rid of the doctrine of *personal* Election in this chapter—namely, that the apostle is treating of the choice, neither of persons nor of nations, but merely of the terms or conditions on which He will save men, and which He has a sovereign right to fix. For in that case the apostle would have said here, "That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works—but by faith." But instead of this, he says, "Not of works (of any merit on our part), but of Him that calleth"—purely of His own will to call whom He pleaseth. Though the predictions respecting Jacob and Esau had reference to their *posterity*, and were fulfilled in them, it is the unconditional choice of the one *individual*, rather than the other, on which the apostle reasons; and it is manifest that the selection of one *race* in preference to

14 What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with  
 15 God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have  
 mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have com-  
 16 passion on whom I will have compassion. So then *it is* not  
 of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God  
 17 that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh,  
 Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I  
 might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be  
 18 declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy

another,—involving so much that affects the ultimate destiny of the *individuals* composing it,—carries *essentially* the same apparent injustice on the part of God as the selection of individuals.

14-24. *The righteousness of this sovereign procedure.*

This topic is handled in the form of answers to two objections, which are so far from being merely hypothetical, that they have been in every age and are to this day the grand, indeed the only plausible, objections to the doctrine of *personal Election*.

*First objection.*—‘The doctrine—that God chooses one and rejects another, not on account of their works, but purely in the exercise of His own good pleasure—is *inconsistent with the justice of God*.’ The answer to this objection extends to ver. 19, where we have a second objection. 14. *What shall we say then?* (see on chap. vi. 1) *Is there unrighteousness with God?* God forbid. Such an objection is only intelligible, as it seems to us, if personal Election is the thing complained of. 15. *For he saith to Moses* (Ex. xxxiii. 19), *I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.* ‘There *can* be no unrighteousness in God’s choosing whom He will, for to Moses He expressly claims a right to do so.’ Yet it is worthy of notice that this is expressed in the positive rather than the negative form: It is not, ‘I will have mercy on *none but* on whom I will;’ but ‘I will have mercy on whomsoever I will.’ The reader ought not to overlook the principle on which the apostle here argues the question with his readers. ‘As when God *says* a thing it must be true, so when God *does* a thing it must be right. But God does say He chooses whom He will; therefore it is both true that He does so, and in doing it, it cannot but be right.’ 16. *So then it is not of him that willeth* (or hath the inward *intention*), *nor of him that runneth* (maketh the active *exertion*): see, for illustration of this phrase, 1 Cor. ix. 24, 26; Phil. ii. 16, iii. 14. Both the ‘willing’ and the ‘running’ are indispensable to salvation; yet salvation is owing to neither, but (is purely) of God that hath mercy. This is strikingly expressed in Phil. ii. 12, 13: ‘Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to *will* and to *do*.’ 17. *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh* (Ex. ix. 16). Observe here the light in which ‘the Scripture’ is viewed by the apostle: *For this very purpose did I raise thee up.* The apostle had shewn that God claims the right to *choose* whom He will; here he shews by an example that God *punishes* whom He will. But (as *Hodge* says) ‘God did not make Pharaoh wicked; He only forbore to make him good, by the exercise of special and altogether unmerited grace.’ *that I might shew in thee my power, and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth.* It was not that Pharaoh was worse than

on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.  
 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault?  
 20 For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art  
 thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say  
 21 to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath  
 not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make  
 22 one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? *What*  
 if God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power  
 known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath

others that he was so dealt with, but that his *character* and *position* combined rendered him a fit subject for the display, as on a great theatre, of God's righteous displeasure against the despisers of His authority, for all time.  
 18. So then he hath—the result is that He hath *mercy* on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth—by judicially abandoning them to the hardening influence of sin itself (chap. i. 24, 26, 28; Ps. lxxxi. 11, 12; Heb. iii. 3, 8, 13), and of the surrounding incentives to it (Matt. xxiv. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 38; 2 Thess. ii. 17). So much for the first objection to the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty.

*Second objection.*—‘This doctrine is incompatible with human responsibility.’  
 19. For thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who withstandeth his will? ‘If God chooses and rejects, pardons and punishes, whom He pleases, why are those blamed who, if rejected by Him, cannot help sinning and perishing?’ This objection shews, quite as conclusively as the former one, the real nature of the doctrine objected to—that it is Election and Non-Election to eternal salvation, *prior to any difference of personal character*: this is the only doctrine that could suggest the objection here stated, and to this doctrine the objection *is* plausible. What now is the apostle's answer? It is twofold: *First*, ‘It is irreverence and presumption in the creature to arraign the Creator.’ 20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? (see Isa. xlv. 9). 21. What! hath not the potter right over the clay?—not “power” (though the word signifies both, or either, according to the connection), for it is not here a question of *power* but of *right* to do what He will with His own, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? The “clay” here referred to, it should be carefully observed, was as God's *own*, yet not as His *creatures*, irrespective of their character, but as *sinners*, or (as they are termed in the next verse) “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.” God may “endure” such “with much long-suffering;” but He can be under no obligation to them; they deserve only the “wages” they have wrought for, which we know to be “death.” But not only is it irreverence and presumption for the creature to arraign his Creator, but, *Second* (as has just been observed), there is nothing unjust in such sovereignty. 22. *What if God, willing to shew (designing to manifest) his wrath*—His holy displeasure against sin, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath—that is, ‘destined to wrath,’ just as in the following verse “vessels of mercy” mean “vessels destined to mercy:” compare Eph. ii. 3, “Children of wrath,” fitted to destruction. It is of no avail to soften such language in one place, when we meet with language equally strong



23 fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had  
 24 afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not  
 25 of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee,

I will call them my people, which were not my people;  
 And her beloved, which was not beloved.

elsewhere in Scripture; and any difficulties so involved can only be driven back, step by step, until we come to difficulties from the existence of evil in the universe of One who, while it is contrary to His nature, and while He has power to exclude it, yet permits it to be. If God, as the apostle teaches, expressly "designed to manifest His wrath, and to make His power (in the way of wrath) known," it could only be by punishing some, while He pardons others; and if the choice between the two classes was not to be founded, as our apostle also teaches, on their own doings but on God's good pleasure, the decision behoved ultimately to rest with God. 23. and that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy. The word "glory" seems to be used here in the same sense as in chap. vi. 4; in which case the whole expression denotes, that 'glorious exuberance of Divine mercy' which was manifested in choosing and eternally arranging for the salvation of sinners. which he afore prepared unto glory, 24. even us, whom he also called—that is, that He might make known the riches of His glory in not only 'afore preparing' but in time effectually calling us.

24-33. *The calling of the Gentiles, and the preservation of only a remnant of Israel, both divinely foretold—The true secret of both events.*

Here, for the first time in this chapter, the calling of the Gentiles is introduced; all before having respect, not to the substitution of the called Gentiles for the rejected Jews, but to the choice of one portion and the rejection of another of the same Israel. Had Israel's rejection been total, God's promise to Abraham would not have been fulfilled by the substitution of the Gentiles in their room; but Israel's rejection being only partial, the preservation of "a remnant," in which the promise was made good, was but "according to the election of grace." And now, for the first time, the apostle tells us that along with this elect remnant of Israel it was God's purpose to "take out of the Gentiles a people for His name" (Acts xv. 14), and that this had been sufficiently announced in the Old Testament Scriptures. Into this new subject the apostle—according to his usual way—slides almost imperceptibly, in the middle of the present verse; so that without careful notice the transition is apt to be overlooked. not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles? 25. As he saith also in Hosea (observe here again how the apostle views the O. T. Scriptures as *God speaking*), I will call that my people, which was not my people (*Gr.* 'the no-people'); and her beloved, which was not beloved. This is quoted (though not quite to the letter) from Hos. ii. 25, a passage relating immediately, not to the heathen, but to the kingdom of the ten tribes; but since they had sunk to the level of the heathen, who were 'not God's people,' and in that sense "not beloved," the apostle legitimately applies it to the heathen, as "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise." (So 1 Pet. ii. 10.) 26. And (another quotation from Hos. i. 10) it shall be that in the place where it was said

- 26 And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people;  
 There shall they be called the children of the living God.  
 27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant  
 28 shall be saved: for he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make  
 29 upon the earth. And as Esaias said before,  
 Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed,  
 We had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

unto them, **Ye are not my people; there shall they be called sons of the living God.** The expression, "in the place where . . . there," must not be taken too strictly, as referring to some particular locality, as Palestine, 'where it was long questioned whether the Gentiles were admissible to Christian fellowship.' It seems designed only to give greater emphasis to the gracious change here announced, from Divine exclusion to Divine admission to the privileges of the people of God. 27. **And Isaiah crieth**—an expression denoting a solemn testimony openly borne. (See John i. 15, vii. 28, 37, xii. 44; Acts xxiii. 24, 41.) concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel *were* as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant (the elect remnant *only*) that shall be saved: 28. for he will finish the matter (or 'the decree') and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work (or 'reckoning') will the Lord make upon the earth.<sup>1</sup> The passage is taken substantially from Isa. xxviii. 22, 23. The sense given to it by the apostle may seem to differ from that intended by the prophet. But the aptness of the quotation for the apostle's purpose, and the sameness of sentiment in both places will at once appear, if we understand those words of the prophet which are rendered "the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness," to mean that while a remnant of Israel should be graciously spared to return from captivity, "the decreed consumption" of the impenitent majority should be "replete with righteousness" or illustriously display God's righteous vengeance against sin. The "short reckoning" seems to mean the speedy completing of His work, both in cutting off the one portion and saving the other. 29. **And as Isaiah hath said before**—meaning probably in an earlier part of his book, namely, chap. i. 9. **Except the Lord of Sabaoth**—'the Lord of hosts:' the word is Hebrew, but occurs so in the Epistle of James (chap. v. 4), and has thence become naturalized in our Christian phraseology. **had left us a seed**—meaning 'a remnant'; small at first, but in due time to be a seed of plenty (cf. Ps. xxii. 30, 31; Isa. vi. 12, 13). **we had become as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.** But for this precious seed, the chosen people would have resembled the cities of the plain, both in degeneracy of character and in merited doom.

*Note.*—In the rejection of the great mass of the chosen people, and the inbringing of multitudes of estranged Gentiles, God would have men to see a law of His procedure which the judgment of the great day will more vividly reveal—that "the last shall be first, and the first last" (Matt. xx. 16).

<sup>1</sup> We adhere to the received text here, both because there is fair evidence for it, and because it best meets the obvious intent of the statement.

- 30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even  
 31 the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law  
 32 of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it not by faith*, but as it were by the works of the law. For they  
 33 stumbled at that stumbling-stone; as it is written,  
 Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence:  
 And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

30. What shall we say then? (see on chap. vi. 1)—‘What now is the result of the whole?’ The result is this—very different from what one would have expected, That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. As we have seen that “the righteousness of faith” is the righteousness which *justifies* (see on chap. iii. 22, etc.), this verse must mean that ‘the Gentiles, who, while strangers to Christ, were quite indifferent about acceptance with God, having embraced the Gospel as soon as it was preached to them, experienced the blessedness of a justified state.’ 31. but Israel, following after the law of righteousness, attained not to the law of righteousness.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty of the verse is to fix the precise sense in which the word “law” is used. That “the law of righteousness” means ‘the righteousness of the law’ (as many hold) is not to be endured. That it means *ideally* ‘the justifying law’ is artificial. The word “law” is used here, plainly in the same sense as in chap. vii. 23, to denote ‘a principle of action’:—‘Israel, though sincerely and steadily seeking after the true principle of acceptance with God, nevertheless missed it.’ 32. Wherefore? Because *they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works*<sup>2</sup>—as being thus attainable, which justification is not; and since it is attainable only by faith, they missed it. They stumbled at the stone of stumbling—meaning *Christ*; 33. even as it is written (Isa. viii. 14, xxviii. 16), Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence: and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame. Two Messianic predictions are here combined, as is not unusual in quotations from the Old Testament. Thus combined, the prediction brings together both the classes of whom the apostle is treating—those to whom Messiah should be only a Stone of stumbling, and those who were to regard Him as the Corner-Stone of all their hopes.

Thus expounded, this chapter presents no serious difficulties—none, in fact, which do not arise out of the subject itself, whose depths are unfathomable; whereas on every other view of it the difficulty of giving it any consistent and worthy interpretation is in our judgment insuperable. Let it ever be borne in mind that on all subjects which from their very nature lie beyond human comprehension, it will be our wisdom to set down what God says in His Word, and has actually done in His procedure towards men, as indisputable, even though it contradict the results at which, in the best exercise of our

<sup>1</sup> External evidence would exclude the second “righteousness.” But it seems clear to us that the omission was occasioned by a misunderstanding of the sense and the recurrence of the same word.

<sup>2</sup> “Of law” is an addition to the best attested text, though a natural one.

CHAP. X. 1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for  
 2 Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record  
 that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.  
 3 For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going  
 about to establish their own righteousness, have not sub-  
 4 mitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ  
 is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that  
 5 believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is

limited judgment, we may have arrived. To do otherwise—demanding the removal of all difficulties in the Divine procedure, as the indispensable condition of our subjection to it—is as unwise as it is impious, driving the inquisitive spirit out of one truth after another, until not a shred even of Natural Religion remains.

#### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED (CHAP. X.).

1, 2. *The yearning of the apostle's heart after Israel's salvation all the greater by reason of their religious zeal.*

1. **Brethren, my heart's** ('my very heart's') desire. The word here rendered desire expresses 'entire complacency,' 'full satisfaction' (as in Matt. xi. 26). **and my supplication to God for them**<sup>1</sup> is, that they may be saved. 2. **For I bear them witness**—not only from intimate knowledge of the best of them, but from his own sad experience—that **they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge** (compare Acts xxii. 3, xxvi. 9–11; Gal. i. 13, 14). This he alludes to, not certainly to excuse their rejection of Christ and rage against His saints, but as some ground of hope regarding them (see 1 Tim. i. 13).

3–13. *Self-righteousness the fatal rock on which Israel split—Christ the Divinely-provided, Divinely-predicted, only, and all-sufficient righteousness of the sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, that believeth.*

3. **For, being ignorant of God's righteousness,** that righteousness which God demands and provides for the justification of the guilty (see on chap. i. 17), **and seeking to establish their own righteousness,**<sup>2</sup> they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. The apostle views as one act the general rejection of Christ by the nation (see John i. 11). 4. **For Christ is the end** (object or aim) **of the law** for (justifying) **righteousness to every one that believeth.** He contains within Himself all that the law demands for the justification of such as receive Him, whether Jew or Gentile (Gal. iii. 24); *bestowing* that righteousness and life which the law *holds forth* but *cannot give*. 'The law (says Bengel, naïvely) hounds a man till he betake himself to Christ; then it says to him, Thou hast found an asylum, I pursue thee no more; thou art wise, thou art safe.' 5. **For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby**<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This, and not "for Israel," is clearly the correct reading here. But at the commencement of a Church Lesson it would be natural to insert the catchword "for Israel," and thus it would creep into the text.

<sup>2</sup> Though considerable external evidence is against this second "righteousness," it is well attested, and internal evidence is far stronger for it.

<sup>3</sup> Such seems to be the correct reading here, as in the R. V.

of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live  
 6 by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh  
 on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into  
 7 heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*;) or, Who  
 shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ  
 8 again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh  
 thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word  
 9 of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with  
 thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart  
 that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be

(see Lev. xviii. 5, etc.). This is the one way of righteousness and life which the law recognises. 6. But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus—its language is to this effect (quoting in substance Deut. xxx. 13, 14, but with a running comment of his own, to bring out the *Christian* reading of the words), Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down):—‘Ye have no need to sigh over the impossibility of attaining to justification; as if one should say, Ah! if I could but get some one to mount up to heaven and fetch me down Christ, there might be some hope; but since that cannot be, mine is a desperate case.’ 7. or, Who shall descend into the abyss? that is (in effect), to bring up Christ from the dead. This is another case of impossibility, suggested by Prov. xxx. 4, and perhaps also Amos ix. 2. These were probably proverbial expressions of impossibility (cp. Ps. cxxxix. 7–10; Prov. xxiv. 7, etc.). 8. But what saith it? [It saith]—continuing the quotation from Deut. xxx. 14, The word is nigh thee—easily accessible, in thy mouth—when thou confessest Him, and in thy heart—when thou believest on Him. The thoughtful student of this passage will observe, that though it is of *the law* that Moses is speaking in the place quoted from, yet it is of the law, as Israel shall be brought to look upon it when the Lord their God shall circumcise their hearts “to love the Lord their God with all their heart,” etc. (ver. 6); and thus, in applying it, the apostle is not merely appropriating the language of Moses, but keeping in the line of his deeper thought. that is, the word of faith, which we preach—*i.e.* the word which men have to believe for salvation (compare, for the phrase, 1 Tim. iv. 6). 9. that if thou shalt confess, or, ‘Because if thou shalt confess.’ The words will bear either sense. If the latter rendering is adopted (as most versions and the majority of critics do), we have in this verse the apostle’s own remarks, confirming the foregoing statements as to the simplicity of the Gospel method of salvation. But we prefer the sense given by the Authorised Version. In this case, the apostle is here expressing in full what he holds to be the true Christian reading of the words of Moses in the passage quoted; in other words, the sense which those words of Moses yield to the intelligent Christian reader of them, with the blaze of Gospel light illuminating those ancient oracles of God—namely, “That if thou shalt confess” with thy mouth, ‘If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord’ (compare 1 Cor. xii. 3; Rom. xiv. 9; Phil. ii. 11), and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead (see on chap. iv. 25), thou shalt be saved. The confession of the mouth, of course, comes, in point of time, after the belief of the heart; but it is put first here to correspond with the foregoing quotation from Deut. xxx. 14—“in thy mouth and in thy heart”

10 saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;  
 11 and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For  
 the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be  
 12 ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and  
 the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that  
 13 call upon him: for whosoever shall call upon the name of  
 the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not  
 believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they  
 have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

(ver. 8). In 2 Pet. i. 10 also, the "calling" of believers is put before their "election," as that which is first 'made sure,' although in point of time it comes after it. In the next verse, however, the two things are placed in their natural order. 10. **for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness**—the righteousness of justification, **and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation**. This confession of Christ's name, especially in times of persecution, and whenever obloquy is attached to the Christian profession, is an indispensable test of discipleship. In Rev. xxi. 8, those who have not the courage to make such confession are meant by the "fearful." 11. **For the scripture saith** (in Isa. xxvii. 16, a glorious Messianic passage), **Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame**. Here, as in chap. ix. 33, the quotation is from the LXX. In the original Hebrew it is, 'shall not make haste'—meaning (as we understand it), 'shall not fly for escape, as from apprehended danger.' The LXX. rendering, here made use of, is but another phase of the same idea. In the former case, the 'security' which the believer has is viewed as a *felt* security, producing 'calm continuance'; in the latter case, it is an *intrinsically solid* security—never putting to shame.

12. **For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all**. The "Lord" here is not God the Father (as some think), but *Christ*, as will be seen by comparing vers. 9, 12, 13, and observing the apostle's usual style on such subjects. **is rich**—a favourite term of our apostle to express the exuberance of the grace that is in Christ Jesus, **unto all that call upon him**. This confirms the application of the preceding words to *Christ*; since to call upon the name of the Lord Jesus is a customary New Testament phrase. (See Acts vii. 59, 60, ix. 14, 21, xxii. 16; 1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 22; and compare Ac's x. 36; Phil. ii. 11.) 13. **For (as the Scripture saith): Whosoever**. The phrase is emphatic—'Every one whosoever,' or, 'Whosoever he be that' **shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved**. These words are from Joel ii. 32; and they are quoted also by Peter in his great Pentecostal sermon (Acts ii. 21) with evident application to Christ. Indeed, this is but one of many Old Testament passages of which *Jehovah* is the Subject, and which in the New Testament are applied to *Christ*—proclaiming His proper Divinity.

14-21. *This universality of the Gospel call supposes its universal proclamation, obnoxious though that is to the Jews, and their own Scriptures foretold it, together with their own rejection of it and its reception by the Gentiles.*

14, 15. **How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and . . . believe in whom they have not heard? or . . . hear**

15 and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the  
 16 gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord,  
 17 who hath believed our report? So then faith *cometh* by  
 18 hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the  
 19 earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish

without a preacher? and . . . preach except . . . sent? 'True, the same Lord over all is rich unto all alike that call upon Him; but this calling implies believing, and believing hearing, and hearing preaching, and preaching a mission to preach. Why, then, take ye it so ill, O children of Abraham, that in obedience to our heavenly mission (Acts xxvi. 16-18) we preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ?' as it is written (Isa. lii. 7), How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! The whole chapter of Isaiah from which this is taken, and the three that follow, are so richly Messianic, that there can be no doubt "the glad tidings" there spoken of announce a more glorious release than that of Judah from the Babylonish captivity, and the very feet of its preachers are called "beautiful" for the sake of their message. What a call and what encouragement is here to missionary activity in the Church! 16. But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings.—'The Scripture prepared us for that.' For Isaiah saith (liii. 1), Lord, who hath believed our report?—'Where shall we find one believer?' The prophet speaks as if next to none would believe; the apostle softens this into "*not all* believed." 17. So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.<sup>1</sup> 18. But I say, Did they not hear?—'that God designed the inbringing of the Gentiles?' Yea, verily, Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world (*Gr.*, 'the inhabited earth'). These beautiful words are from Ps. xix. 4. Whether the apostle quoted them as in their primary intention applicable to his subject, or only used Scriptural language to express his own ideas, as is done involuntarily almost by every preacher in every sermon, expositors are not agreed. But though the latter seems the more natural—"the rising of the Sun of righteousness upon the world" (Mal. iv. 2), "the day-spring from on high visiting us, giving light to them that sat in darkness, and guiding our feet into the way of peace" (Luke i. 78, 79), must have been familiar and delightful to the apostle's ear, and we cannot doubt that the irradiation of the world with the beams of a better sun, by the universal diffusion of the Gospel of Christ, must have been a mode of speaking quite natural, and to him scarcely figurative; not to say that in that very Psalm the glory of God in His word is represented as transcending and eclipsing that of His works in nature, of which this verse more immediately speaks. 19. But I say, Did Israel not know?—from their own Scriptures, of God's intention to bring in the Gentiles? First—'to begin with the earliest in the prophetic line, —Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation ('with a no-nation'), and

<sup>1</sup> Such, beyond doubt, is the correct reading here.

20 nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

**with a nation void of understanding will I anger you.** The words are from Deut. xxxii. 21 (almost entirely as in the LXX.). In that chapter Moses prophetically sings the future destinies of his people; and in this verse God warns His ancient people that, because they had moved Him (that is, in after times would move Him) to jealousy with their "no-gods," and provoked Him to anger with their vanities, He, in requital, would move them to jealousy by receiving into His favour a no-nation, and provoke them to anger by adopting a nation void of understanding. 20. **But Esaias is very bold, and saith—**'is still plainer, and goes even the length of saying,' **I was found of them that sought me not**—that is, until I sought *them*; I became manifest unto them that asked not of me—that is, until the invitation from Me came to them. That the calling of the Gentiles was meant by these words of the prophet (Isa. lxxv. 1), is manifest from what immediately follows: "I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." 21. **But as to Israel he saith, All the day long did I spread out my hands**—the attitude of gracious entreaty, **unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.** These words, which immediately follow the announcement just quoted of the calling of the Gentiles, were enough to forewarn the Jews both of God's purpose to eject them from their privileges, in favour of the Gentiles, and of the cause of it on their own part.

Some of the general truths conveyed by this chapter we have reserved for this place, to prevent interrupting the flow of the argument in the places to which they belong.

*Notes.*—(1) Mere sincerity, and even earnestness in religion—though it may be some ground of hope for a merciful recovery from error (see 1 Tim. i. 13)—is no excuse, and will not compensate, for the deliberate rejection of saving truth, when in the providence of God presented for acceptance: vers. 1, 2. (2) The true cause of such rejection of saving truth, by the otherwise sincere, is the prepossession of the mind by some false notions of its own. So long as the Jews "sought to establish their own righteousness," it was in the nature of things impossible that they should "submit themselves to the righteousness of God;" the one of these two methods of acceptance being in the teeth of the other. (3) Is there one soul sighing for salvation, but saying within itself, 'Ah! Salvation is beyond my reach: others may be able to lay hold of it; but for me, who have so long and so perseveringly set at nought all His counsel and despised all His reproof, Christ seems so far off that I may as well think to mount up to heaven and pluck Him down, or descend into the deep to bring Him up from thence?' How gloriously does the apostle here teach us to deal with such a case! 'The word (says he) is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart—the word of faith which we preach: Christ is *in the heart* of every one who believeth on Him, *in the mouth* of whoso confesseth Him; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' (4) How piercingly and perpetually should that question—"How SHALL THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER?"—sound in the ears of all



CHAP. XI. 1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, 2 of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of

the churches, as but the apostolic echo of their Lord's parting injunction, "PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE" (Mark xvi. 15); and how far below the proper standard of love, zeal, and self-sacrifice must the churches as yet be, when with so plenteous a harvest the labourers are yet so few (Matt. ix. 37, 38), and that cry from the lips of pardoned, gifted, consecrated men—"Here am I, send me" (Isa. vi. 8), is not heard everywhere! vers. 14, 15. (5) The blessing of a covenant-relation to God is the irrevocable privilege of no people and no church: it can be preserved only by fidelity, on our part, to the covenant itself: ver. 19. (6) God is often found by those who apparently are the farthest from Him, while He remains undiscovered by those who think themselves the nearest: vers. 20, 21; and see Matt. viii. 11, 12, xix. 30. (7) How affectingly is the attitude of God towards the ungrateful and persevering rejecters of His love here presented to us—all the day long extending the arms of His mercy even to the disobedient and gainsaying! This tenderness and compassion of God, in His dealings even with reprobate sinners, will be felt and acknowledged at last by all who perish, to the glory of God's forbearance and to their own confusion, imparting to their misery its bitterest ingredient.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED AND CONCLUDED—THE ULTIMATE  
INBRINGING OF ALL ISRAEL TO FORM, WITH THE GENTILES,  
ONE KINGDOM OF GOD ON THE EARTH (CHAP. XI.).

The scope of this chapter is to explain the present condition, and open up the future prospects of Israel; and the sum of it is, that although God might seem to have cast off His covenant people, this rejection was neither *total* nor *final*:—not total, for even now there is a chosen remnant, that have believed through grace; not final, for a time is coming when all Israel shall be saved.

1-10. FIRST, *Even now, Israel is not wholly rejected.*

1. I say then, Did God cast away his people? God forbid. Our Lord did indeed announce that 'the kingdom of God should be *taken from* Israel' (Matt. xxi. 41); and when asked by the Eleven, after His resurrection, if He would at that time "*restore* the kingdom to Israel," His reply is a virtual admission that Israel was in some sense already out of covenant (Acts i. 9). Yet here the apostle teaches that, in two respects, Israel was *not* "cast away." *First*, Israel is not *wholly* cast away. For I also am an Israelite (see Phil. iii. 5)—and so a living witness to the contrary; of the seed of Abraham—of pure descent from the father of the faithful; of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. iii. 5)—that tribe which, on the revolt of the ten tribes, constituted, with Judah, the one faithful kingdom of God (1 Kings xii. 21), and after the captivity was, along with Judah, the kernel of the Jewish nation (Ezra iv. 1, x. 9). 2. God did not cast off his people which he foreknew. This shews clearly that the same word in chap. viii. 29 does not mean that he 'foresaw that they would prove a believing and holy people' (but see exposition of Rom. viii. 29). Or (or 'What?') wot ('know') ye not what

Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel,  
 3 saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down  
 thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.  
 4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved  
 to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee  
 5 to *the image of Baal*. Even so then at this present time also  
 6 there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And  
 if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is  
 no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more  
 7 grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel  
 hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election  
 8 hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded: (according as it

the scripture saith of Elijah? (or 'in Elijah,' meaning the section about Elijah), how he pleadeth with God against Israel, 3. Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have digged down thine altars, and I am left alone, and they seek my life:—'Living witness for Thee in Israel there is none now but I, who have had to fly thus far to Thee from the rage of Thine enemies.' 4. But what saith the answer of God to him? I have left for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. 5. Even so then at this present time—even in this period of Israel's apparently universal degeneracy—there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 'As in Elijah's time the apostasy of Israel was not so universal as it seemed to be, and as he in his despondency concluded it to be, so now, the rejection of Christ by Israel is not so appalling in extent as one would be apt to think: There is now, as there was then, a faithful remnant; not, however, of persons naturally better than the unbelieving mass, but of persons graciously chosen to salvation.' (See 1 Cor. iv. 7; 2 Thess. ii. 13.) This establishes our view of the argument on Election in chap. ix., as not being an election of Gentiles in the room of Jews, and merely to religious advantages, but a sovereign choice of some of Israel itself, from amongst others, to believe and be saved. (See on chap. ix. 6.)

*Note.*—It is an unspeakable consolation to know that in times of deepest religious declension and most extensive defection from the truth the lamp of God has never been permitted to go out, and that a faithful remnant has ever existed—a remnant larger than their own drooping spirits could easily believe. But the preservation of this remnant, even as their separation at the first, is all of grace.

6. But if it (the election) is by grace, it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.<sup>1</sup> The position here expressed is fundamental, and of the last importance—that there are but two possible ways of salvation, men's works and God's grace; and these are so essentially distinct and opposite, that salvation cannot be of any combination or mixture of both; it must be wholly either of the one or of the other. 7. What then?—How stands the case? That which Israel seeketh for (namely, justification, acceptance with God), that he obtained not; but the election (the elect

<sup>1</sup> The latter part of this verse (in the received text), though ably defended, is so weakly supported by external evidence (and this not without variation), that since it is certainly not required by the argument, it is better omitted.

is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;)

9 unto this day. And David saith,

Let their table be made a snare, and a trap,

And a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them :

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see,

And bow down their back alway.

11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall?

God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come*

12 unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles ; how much more their ful-

13 ness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the

14 apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are my flesh,*

15 and might save some of them. For if the casting away of

remnant of Israel) obtained it, and the rest were hardened—judicially given over to the hardening of their own hearts: according as it is written (in Isa. xxix. 10, and Deut. xxix. 4), God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear; unto this very day. 9. And David saith (in Ps. lxi. 22, 23, which in such a Messianic Psalm must point to the rejecters of Christ), Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them—'Let their very blessings prove a curse to them, and their enjoyments only sting, and take vengeance on them.' Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway—expressing the *decrepitude* or the servile condition to come upon the nation through the just judgment of God. The apostle's object in making these quotations is to shew that what he had been compelled to say of the then condition and prospects of his nation was more than borne out by their own Scriptures. But now,

11-32. SECONDLY, *Even as a nation, Israel is not finally rejected, but is destined to a glorious recovery.*

11. I say then, Did they stumble that they might fall? God forbid: but by their fall ('trespass,' 'lapse') salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Here, as in chap. x. 19 (quoted from Deut. xxxii. 21), we see the principle of emulation Divinely called into exercise as a stimulus to what is good. 12. Now if their fall *is* the riches of the (Gentile) world—as being the occasion of their accession to Christ—and their loss (or 'diminishing' the reduction of the true Israel to so small a remnant) the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness!—'If an event so untoward as Israel's fall was the occasion of such unspeakable good to the Gentile world, of how much greater good may we expect an event so blessed as their full recovery to be productive!' 13. But I speak to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry: 14. if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *them that are my flesh,* and may save some of them. 15. For if the

them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving  
 16 of *them be*, but life from the dead? For if the first-fruit *be*  
 holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are*  
 17 the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off,  
 and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among  
 them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the  
 18 olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast,  
 19 thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say

casting away of them is the reconciling of the world. The apostle had denied that they were cast away (ver. 1), but here he affirms it; for both are true—not totally and finally, but partially and temporarily they *were* “cast away.” *what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?* It is surely a very strained explanation of these words to apply them to the literal resurrection, as so many interpreters do, modern as well as ancient. But to take it as a mere proverbial expression for the highest felicity is far too loose. The meaning no doubt is, that the reception of the whole family of Israel, scattered as they are among all nations under heaven, and the most inveterate enemies of the Lord Jesus, will be such a stupendous manifestation of the power of God upon the spirits of men, and of His glorious presence with the heralds of the Cross, as will not only kindle devout astonishment far and wide, but so change the dominant mode of thinking and feeling on all spiritual things as to seem like a *resurrection from the dead*. 16. *And if the first-fruit is holy, so is the lump; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.* The Israelites were required to offer to God the first-fruits of the earth—both in their raw state, in a sheaf of newly-reaped grain (Lev. xxiii. 10, 11), and in their prepared state, made into cakes of dough (Num. xv. 19–21), by which the whole produce for that season was regarded as *hallowed*. It is probably the latter of these offerings that is here intended, as to it the word “lump” best applies; and the argument of the apostle is, that as the separation unto God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from the rest of mankind, to be the parent stem of their race, was as real an offering of first-fruits as that which hallowed the produce of the earth, so, in the Divine estimation, it was as real a separation of the mass or “lump” of that nation in all time to God. The figure of the “root” and its “branches” is of like import—the consecration of the one of them extending to the other. 17. *But if—‘If notwithstanding this consecration of Abraham’s race to God’—some of the branches were broken off.* The mass of unbelieving and rejected Israel are here called “some,” not, as before, to meet Jewish prejudice (see on chap. iii. 3, and on “not all,” in chap. x. 16), but with the opposite view of checking Gentile pride. *and thou, being a wild olive, wast grafted in among them.* Though it is more usual to graft the superior cutting upon the inferior stem, the opposite method, which is intended here, is not without example: *and didst become partaker with them of the root and fatness<sup>1</sup> of the olive tree; glory not over the branches: but if thou gloriest, it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee.* ‘If the branches may not boast over the root that bears them, then may not the Gentile boast over the seed of Abraham; for what is thy standing, O Gentile, in relation to

<sup>1</sup> There is strong external authority for “the root of the fatness,” but the received text seems preferable.

then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted  
 20 in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and  
 21 thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if  
 God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also  
 22 spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity  
 of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, good-  
 ness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also  
 23 shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in  
 unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in  
 24 again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is

Israel, but that of a branch in relation to the root? From Israel hath come  
 all that thou art and hast in the family of God; for "salvation is of the  
 Jews" (John iv. 22). 19. Thou wilt say then (as a plea for boasting), The  
 branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20. Well—"Be it  
 so, but remember that," by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou  
 standest (not as a Gentile, but solely) by thy faith. But as faith cannot  
 live in those "whose soul is lifted up" (Hab. ii. 4), Be not high-minded,  
 but fear (Prov. xxviii. 14; Phil. ii. 12). 21. For if God spared not the  
 natural branches (sprung from the parent stem), neither will he spare  
 thee.<sup>1</sup> Beforehand, the former might have been thought very improbable;  
 but after that, no one can wonder at the latter. 22. Behold then the  
 goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but  
 toward thee, goodness,<sup>2</sup> if thou continue in his goodness—"in believing  
 dependence upon that goodness which made thee all thou art: 'otherwise  
 thou also shalt be cut off. 23. And they also, if they continue not in  
 their unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in  
 again. This appeal to the *power* of God to effect the recovery of His ancient  
 people implies the vast difficulty and apparent improbability of it—which all  
 who have ever laboured for the conversion of the Jews are made depressingly  
 to feel. That intelligent expositors should think that this was meant of  
*individual* Jews, re-introduced from time to time into the family of God on  
 their believing on the Lord Jesus, is surprising; and yet those who deny the  
*national* recovery of Israel must and do so interpret the apostle. But this  
 is to confound the two things which the apostle carefully distinguishes.  
 Individual Jews have been at all times admissible, and have been actually  
 admitted to the Church through the gate of faith in the Lord Jesus. This  
 is the "remnant, *even at this present time*, according to the election of grace,"  
 of which the apostle, in the first part of the chapter, had cited himself as one.  
 But here he manifestly speaks of something *not* then existing, but to be  
 looked forward to as a great future event in the Divine economy, the  
 re-ingrafting of *the nation as such*, when "they abide not in unbelief." And  
 though this is here spoken of merely as a supposition (*if* their unbelief shall  
 cease)—in order to set it over against the other supposition, of what will  
 happen to the Gentiles if they shall not abide in the faith—the supposition is  
 turned into an explicit prediction in the verses following. 24. For if thou  
 wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast

<sup>1</sup> Such is plainly the correct reading here.

<sup>2</sup> The reading "God's goodness" bears marks of being a grammatical emendation, to fit  
 in with the following clause.

wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the  
 25 natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of  
 26 the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written,

There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer,  
 And shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which are the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree? This is just the converse of what is said in ver. 21: 'As the excision of the mere *engrafted* Gentiles through unbelief is a thing much more to be expected than was the excision of the *natural* Israel, before it happened, so the restoration of Israel, when they shall be brought to believe in Jesus, is a thing far more in the line of what we should expect than the admission of the Gentiles to a standing which they never before enjoyed.' 25. For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery. The word "mystery," so often used by our apostle, does not mean, as with us, something incomprehensible, but 'something before kept secret, either wholly or for the most part, and now only fully disclosed' (cf. chap. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 7-10; Eph. i. 9, 10; iii. 3-6, 9, 10, etc.). lest ye be wise in your own conceits—as if ye alone were now and in all time coming to be the family of God,—that a hardening in part hath happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in—not the general conversion of the world to Christ, as many take it; for this would seem to contradict the latter part of the chapter, and throw the national recovery of Israel too far into the future; besides, in ver. 15 the apostle seems to speak of the receiving of Israel, not as following, but as contributing largely to bring about the general conversion of the world: clearly it means, 'until the Gentiles have had their *full* time of the visible Church all to themselves, while the Jews are out, which the Jews had till the Gentiles were brought in.' See Luke xxi. 24. 26. And so all Israel shall be saved—not 'all the *spiritual* Israel,' Jew and Gentile (as some), for throughout all this chapter, the apostle by "Israel" means exclusively the *natural* seed of Abraham, whom he sharply distinguishes from the Gentiles; nor the whole believing *remnant* of the natural Israel (as others). Clearly the meaning here is, *The Israelitish nation at large*. To understand this great statement, as some still do, merely of such a gradual inbringing of *individual* Jews, that there shall at length none remain in unbelief, is to do manifest violence both to it and to the whole context. It can only mean the ultimate ingathering of Israel as a *nation*, in contrast with the present "remnant." Some critics would seem to advocate the inbringing of every individual Israelite; but it is simply 'the nation at large,' as opposed to a 'remnant.'

Three confirmations of this cheering announcement now follow: two from the prophets, and a third from the Abrahamic covenant itself. *First confirmation*—from the prophets. even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, He shall turn away ungodliness from

- 27 For this *is* my covenant unto them,  
 When I shall take away their sins.  
 28 As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes:  
 but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers'  
 29 sakes. For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repent-

Jacob. The apostle, having drawn his illustrations of man's *sinfulness* chiefly from Ps. xiv. and Isa. lix., now seems to combine the language of the same two places regarding Israel's *salvation* from it. In the one place the Psalmist longs to see "the salvation of Israel coming out of Zion" (Ps. xiv. 7); in the other, the prophet announces that "the Redeemer (or, "Deliverer") shall come to (or, *for*) Zion" (Isa. lix. 20). But as all the glorious manifestations of Israel's God were regarded as issuing out of Zion, as the seat of His manifested glory (Ps. xx. 2, cx. 2; Isa. xxxi. 9), the turn which the apostle gives to the words merely adds to them that familiar idea. And whereas the prophet announces that He "shall come to (or, *for*)" them that turn from transgression in Jacob," while the apostle makes him say that He shall come "to turn away ungodliness *from* Jacob," this is taken from the LXX., and seems to indicate a different reading of the original text. The sense, however, is substantially the same in both. *Second confirmation*—from the prophets. 27. And (introducing a new quotation) *this is my covenant unto them, When I shall take away their sins.* This, we believe, is rather a brief summary of Jer. xxxi. 31-34, than the express words of any prediction. Those who believe that there are no predictions regarding the literal Israel in the Old Testament that stretch beyond the end of the Jewish economy, are obliged to view these quotations by the apostle as mere adaptations of Old Testament language to express his own predictions. But how forced this is, we shall presently see.

*Third confirmation*—from the Abrahamic covenant itself :—28. *As touching the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes*—they are regarded and treated as enemies in a state of exclusion through unbelief from the family of God, for the benefit of you Gentiles (in the sense of vers. 11, 15); *but as touching the election (of Abraham and his seed), they are beloved—even in their state of exclusion, for the fathers' sakes.* 29. *For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance*—'are not to be (or 'cannot be') repented of.' By the "*calling* of God," in this case, is meant that sovereign act by which God, in the exercise of His free choice, "called" Abraham to be the father of a peculiar people; while "*the gifts* of God" here denote the articles of the covenant which God made with Abraham, and which constituted the real distinction between his and all other families of the earth. Both these, says the apostle, are irrevocable; and as the point for which he refers to this at all is the *final destiny* of the Israelitish nation, it is clear that *the perpetuity through all time of the Abrahamic covenant* is the thing here affirmed. And lest any should say that though Israel, *as a nation*, has no destiny at all under the Gospel, but as a people disappeared from the stage when the middle wall of partition was broken down, yet the Abrahamic covenant still endures in the *spiritual* seed of Abraham, made up of Jews and Gentiles in one undistinguished mass of redeemed men under the Gospel—as if to preclude that supposition, the apostle expressly states that the very Israel who, as concerning the Gospel, are regarded as "*enemies for the Gentiles' sakes*," are "*beloved for the fathers' sakes*;" and it is in proof of this that he

30 ance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet  
 31 have now obtained mercy through their unbelief, even so  
 have these also now not believed, that through your mercy  
 32 they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them  
 33 all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the  
 depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of

adds, "For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance." *Note*.—Those who think that in all the evangelical prophecies of the Old Testament the terms "Jacob," "Israel," etc., are to be understood solely of the *Christian Church*, would appear to read the Old Testament differently from the apostle, who, from the use of those very terms in Old Testament prophecy, draws arguments to prove that God has mercy in store for the *natural Israel*.

But in what sense are the now unbelieving and excluded children of Israel "beloved for the fathers' sakes"? Not merely from ancestral *recollections*, as one looks with fond interest on the child of a dear friend for that friend's sake—a beautiful thought of the late *Dr. Arnold*, and not foreign to Scripture in this very case (see 2 Chron. xx. 7; Isa. xli. 8); but it is from ancestral *connections* and *obligations*, or their lineal descent from and oneness in covenant with the fathers with whom God originally established it. In other words, the natural Israel—not "the *remnant* of them according to the election of grace," but THE NATION, sprung from Abraham according to the flesh—are still an elect people, and as such, "beloved." The very same love which chose the fathers, and rested on the fathers as a parent stem of the nation, still rests on their descendants at large, and will yet recover them from unbelief, and reinstate them in the family of God. 29. For as ye in time past were disobedient to God—yielded not to God "the obedience of faith," but now have obtained mercy by (occasion of) their disobedience (see on vers. 11, 15, 28), 31. even so have these (Jews) also now been disobedient, that by the mercy shewn to you they also may now obtain mercy. Here is an entirely new idea. The apostle has hitherto dwelt upon the unbelief of the Jews as making way for the faith of the Gentiles—the exclusion of the one occasioning the reception of the other; a truth which could yield to generous, believing Gentiles but mingled satisfaction. Now, opening a more cheering prospect, he speaks of the mercy shewn to the Gentiles as a means of Israel's recovery, which seems to mean that it will be by the instrumentality of believing Gentiles that Israel as a nation is at length to "look on Him whom they pierced, and mourn for Him," and so to "obtain mercy." See 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16. 32. For God hath shut up all unto disobedience—not "*them* all," as in the Authorised Version, for this might be thought to refer to the *Jews only*; whereas the argument requires it to be understood of both the great divisions of mankind that are treated of in this chapter—God designed that Jew and Gentile alike should be seen, in their turn, as rejecters of this truth, that he might have mercy upon all—the Gentiles first, and after them the Jews.

33–36. *The adorableness of this plan of Divine mercy.*

33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. These words may be rendered, 'O the depth of the riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of God,' as many expositors think is meant. But certainly 'the riches of God' is a much rarer expression with our apostle than the riches of this or that perfection of God. And what seems decisive, the words



God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways  
 34 past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the  
 35 Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first  
 given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?  
 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to  
 whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

immediately following limit our attention to the unsearchableness of God's "*judgments*," by which are probably meant His decrees or plans (Ps. cxix. 75), and of "*His ways*," or the method by which He carries those into effect. And all that follows to the end of the chapter seems to shew that while the *Grace* of God to guilty men in Christ Jesus is presupposed to be the whole theme of this chapter, that which called forth the special admiration of the apostle, after sketching at some length the Divine purposes and methods in the bestowment of this Grace, was 'the depth of the riches of God's *wisdom and knowledge*' in these purposes and methods. The "*knowledge*," then, points probably to the vast sweep of Divine comprehension herein displayed; the "*wisdom*" to that fitness to accomplish the ends intended which is stamped on all this procedure. 34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? (see Job xv. 8; Jer. xxiii. 18), or who hath been his counsellor? (see Isa. xl. 13, 14). 35. or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? (see Job xxxv. 7, xli. 11). These questions, it will thus be seen, are just quotations from the Old Testament, as if to shew how familiar to God's ancient people was the great truth which the apostle himself had just uttered—that God's plans and methods in the dispensation of His Grace have a reach of comprehension and wisdom stamped upon them which finite mortals cannot fathom, much less could ever have imagined before they were disclosed. 36. For of him—as their *Eternal Source*, as 1 Cor. viii. 6, and (though of a more limited sphere) 1 Cor. xi. 12; and through him—as the sole *Efficient Agent* in the production and conservation of them; and unto him—as their Last End—are all things—the manifestation of the glory of His own perfections being the ultimate, because the highest possible, design of all His procedure from first to last: to whom ('to Him') *be* glory for ever. Amen.

In this threefold view of God many of the fathers saw a covert reference to the three Persons of the Godhead (and they are followed by some moderns). But here, at least, that cannot be admitted, as '*to Him*' can have no reference to any known property or work of *the Spirit*. Thus grandly, and with a brevity and rhythm worthy of the sublimity of the thoughts, does the apostle sum up, not only this profound and comprehensive chapter, but the whole doctrinal portion of this Epistle.

## CHAPTERS XII.-XV.—CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

CHAP. XII. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies

The strictly doctrinal teaching of this great Epistle being now concluded, the apostle, 'as a wise master-builder,' follows it up in this and the remaining chapters by impressing on believers the holy obligations which their new

of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,  
2 acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.* And

standing and life in Christ imposed upon them. In doing this he first puts clearly before them, in a couple of verses, the general character of all Christian service, and then goes at some length into a variety of details.

1, 2. *Self-consecration the sum of Christian service.*

1. I beseech you therefore, brethren—in view of all that has been opened up in the preceding part of this Epistle, by the mercies of God—whose free and unmerited nature, glorious Channel, and saving fruits we have now so fully seen, to present your bodies—your whole embodied selves (see on chap. vi. 12). As it is through the body that all the evil that is in the unrenewed heart comes forth into palpable manifestation and action, so it is through the body that all the gracious principles and affections of believers reveal themselves in the outward life. The Christian must never forget that as corruption extends to the whole man, so does sanctification (see 1 Thess. v. 23, 24).  
a living sacrifice—a glorious contrast to the legal sacrifices, which, save as *slain*, were no sacrifices at all. The death of the one ‘Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world,’ has swept all dead victims from off the altar of God, to make room for the redeemed themselves, as ‘*living sacrifices*’ to Him who made “Him to be sin for us;” while every outgoing of their grateful hearts in praise, and every act prompted by the love of Christ, is itself a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour (Heb. xiii. 15, 16).  
holy. As the Levitical victims, when offered without blemish to God, were regarded as holy, so believers, ‘yielding themselves to God as those that are alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness unto God,’ are, in His estimation, not ritually but really “holy,” and so acceptable (*Gr.* ‘well-pleasing’) unto God—not as the Levitical offerings were pleasing to God, merely as appointed symbols of spiritual ideas, but which, when offered by those who were void of the character which they represented, were hateful to God (Isa. i. 13–15, lxvi. 3, etc.): believers, in their renewed character and endeared relationship to God through His Son Jesus Christ, are objects of Divine complacency intrinsically, when presenting to Him their bodies a living and holy sacrifice. *which is your reasonable service.* The word here rendered “service” means the service of *worship*, and when this is called “reasonable,” the meaning probably is that this is the ‘worship of the reason,’ or ‘spiritual worship,’ in contrast with the ceremonial character of the Levitical worship: compare 1 Pet. ii. 2, where the same word is used (and nowhere else) for “the milk of the *word*,” or ‘rational milk,’ in contrast with the material substance on which babes are nourished. This presentation of ourselves as living monuments of redeeming mercy, and as Divine property in the highest sense, is here called the “service of worship;” for as all believers are “priests unto God” (Rev. i. 6), so their whole Christian life is just the continuous exercise of this exalted priesthood, their “rational worship” (see 1 Pet. ii. 5, and compare John iv. 24). As redemption under the Gospel is not by the sacrifice of irrational victims, as under the law—when redemption was only in promise, and could only be held forth in type—but “by the precious blood of Christ,” by which now “once in the end of the world” sin hath been put completely and for ever away (1 Pet. i. 18, 19; Heb. ix. 26), so all the sacrifices which believers are now called to offer are “living sacrifices;” and summed up, as they all are, in *self-consecration* to the service of God, they are “holy,” they

be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that 3 good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, are "acceptable unto God," and they together make up 'our rational service.' In this light, what are we to think of the so-called '*unbloody sacrifice of the mass, continually offered to God as a propitiation for the sins both of the living and the dead,*' which the adherents of Rome's faith have for ages been taught to believe is the highest and holiest act of Christian worship? The least that can be said of it is, that it is in flat contradiction to the teaching of this Epistle to the first Christians of Rome.

In the next verse the same great worship of *self-consecration* is inculcated under another aspect. The apostle had bidden us present our *bodies* a living sacrifice to God. But since it is by our bodies that we move about and mix in society, and come in contact with all the various phases of life, how are we to carry out our Christianity in the evil and bewitching world around us? Ver. 2 gives both a negative and positive answer to this question. 2. **And be not conformed to this world.** "The world"—when used in the N. T. to denote the bulk of mankind—are all who are destitute of spiritual life, and consequently have no sympathy with spiritual things, whose ambitions, interests, and tastes are all bounded by and centred in "the world" that "passeth away and the lust thereof," who "mind earthly things," and are, to use our Lord's description of them, "the children of this world." Believers are therefore charged here not to be conformed to it. For being "risen with Christ" they have new aims, and are governed by new principles, they breathe another air from that of "the world," and their sympathies and tastes are the reverse of theirs (see 2 Cor. vi. 14-18). The thing enjoined is not a mere outward disconformity to the ungodly world, many of whom may, in themselves, be virtuous and praiseworthy. But it is that tendency, through much familiarity with "the world," to sink the peculiarities of the Christian life and spirit and tone, and to slide into *its* views of things and ways of acting, until all difference between the two ceases to be perceptible. This, as it "grieves the Holy Spirit of God," so it blunts the edge of our spiritual feeling, makes us "forget that we have been purged from our old sins" (2 Pet. i. 9), and lays us open to much temptation. **but be ye transformed** (see the same word in Matt. xvii. 2, where it is rendered "transfigured;" and in 2 Cor. iii. 18, where (in the R. V.) it is rendered, as here, "transformed"). **by the renewing of your mind**—such an *inward* transformation as makes the *outward* actions, even when differing in nothing from those of "the world," to be wholly "new." This, after all, is the one true preservative against 'conformity to the world.' It is the lively presence and ruling power of the *positive* element that will alone effectually keep out of the heart the *negative* one. **that ye may prove**—experimentally, learn by proof (for this word see on chap. v. 4) what is the good and acceptable (the 'well-pleasing') and perfect will of God. This will you find by your own experience to be "good," demanding only what is essentially and unchangeably good (chap. vii. 12); it is "*well-pleasing*," in contrast with all that is arbitrary, demanding only what God has eternal complacency in (compare Mic. vi. 8 with Jer. ix. 24); and it is "*perfect*," requiring nothing else than the perfection of God's reasonable creature, who, in proportion as he attains to it, reflects God's own perfection. Such, then, is the great general work of the Christian life—the comprehensive business of the redeemed. But to

through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to  
 4 every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:  
 5 so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one  
 6 members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us*  
 7 *prophecy* according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, *let*

rest in generalities, however precious, is not our apostle's way in writing to the churches. He hastens, as usual, to the details of Christian duty; those specified being—

*First (3-8): A modest estimate and loving exercise of our own gifts, relatively to those of our fellow-Christians.*

3. For I say, through the grace that was given me—as an apostle of Jesus Christ, thus exemplifying his own precept by modestly falling back on that office which both warranted and required such plainness towards all classes. to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly. It is impossible to convey in good English the emphatic play which each word here has upon another,—‘not to be high-minded above what he ought to be minded, but so to be minded as to be sober-minded.’ To be ‘high-minded above what he ought to be minded’ is merely a strong way of characterizing all undue self-elevation. according as God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith. Faith is here viewed as the inlet to or seed-bed of all the other graces, and so as the receptive faculty of the renewed soul—‘As God hath given to each his particular capacity to take in the gifts and graces which He designs for the general good.’ 4. For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: 5. so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. The same diversity in unity, which we find in the natural body, obtains in the body of Christ, whereof all believers are the several members. 6. And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us. (Note here how all the gifts of Christians are alike viewed as communications of *grace*.) whether we have the gift of prophecy—that is, the gift of inspired teaching (as in Acts xv. 32). Any one speaking with Divine authority—whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future—was termed a prophet (Ex. vii. 1). The prophets of the New Testament rank next to “apostles” (1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. ii. 20): let us prophecy according to the proportion of our faith. Many excellent expositors render these words, ‘according to the analogy of faith,’ understanding by that ‘the general tenor’ or ‘rule of faith,’ divinely delivered to men for their guidance. But this is against the context, whose object is to shew that, as all the gifts of believers are according to their respective capacity for them, they are not to be puffed up on account of them, but to use them purely for their proper ends. 7. or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry. The familiar word here used imports any kind of service, from the dispensing of the word of life (Acts vi. 4) to the administering of the temporal affairs of the Church (Acts vi. 1-3). The latter seems intended

*us wait on our ministering*; or he that teacheth, on teaching;  
 8 or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it with simplicity*; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that  
 9 sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. *Let love be without dissimulation*. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which  
 10 is good. *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly*  
 11 *love*; in honour preferring one another; not slothful in  
 here, being distinguished from 'prophesying,' 'teaching,' and 'exhorting,' or he that teacheth, to our teaching. Teachers are expressly distinguished in the New Testament from prophets, and put after them, as exercising a lower function (Acts xiii. 1; 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29). Probably it consisted mainly in opening up the evangelical bearings of Old Testament Scripture; and it was in this department apparently that Apollos shewed his power and learning (Acts xvii. 24). 8. or he that exhorteth. Since all preaching—whether by apostles, prophets, or teachers—was followed up by exhortation (Acts xi. 23, xiv. 22, xv. 32, etc.), many think that no specific class is here in view. But if liberty was given to others to exercise themselves occasionally in *exhorting*, either the brethren generally or small parties of the less instructed, the reference may be to them. He that giveth—in the exercise of private benevolence, probably, rather than in the discharge of diaconal duty, *let him do it with liberality* (Gr. 'singleness'), as the same word is rendered 2 Cor. viii. 2, ix. 11. he that ruleth with diligence—'earnest purpose,' whether in the Church, which perhaps is meant, or in his own household (see 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5): he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness—not only without grudging what he gives or the trouble it causes him, but feeling it to be "more blessed to give than to receive," and to help than be helped.

*Second (9, 10): Sundry other ways of manifesting brotherly love.*

9. Let love be without hypocrisy, or 'unfeigned,' as the same word is rendered in 2 Cor. vi. 6; 1 Pet. i. 22; and see 1 John iii. 18. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. What a lofty tone of moral principle and feeling is here inculcated! It is not, Abstain from the one, and do the other; nor, Turn away from the one, and draw to the other; but, Abhor the one, and cling, with deepest sympathy, to the other. 10. In love of the brethren be kindly affectioned one to another, in honour preferring one another. In giving or shewing honour, outdoing each other. How opposite is this to the reigning morality of the heathen world; and though Christianity has so changed the spirit of society that a certain beautiful disinterestedness and self-sacrifice shines in the character of not a few who are but partially, if at all, under the transforming power of the Gospel, it is only those whom "the love of Christ constrains to live not unto themselves," who are capable of habitually acting in the spirit of this precept.

*Third (11, 12): Personal duties.* As all the duties inculcated in this chapter, from ver. 3 to the end, are *relative*, one can hardly suppose that the six *personal* duties (as they are usually termed) were intended as a formal statement of all belonging to that class. They seem, therefore, to have been suggested to the apostle's mind rather as a necessary *balance* to the relative duties which he had just been inculcating. They are laid down in the form of two triplets, one in each of the two verses. 11. In diligence, not slothful. The word rendered "diligence" means 'zeal,' 'purposeness,'

- 12 business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;  
 13 distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

denoting energy in action. **fervent** ('burning') in **spirit**. This is exactly what is said of Apollos, Acts xviii. 25. Of evil times that were to come upon the Christian world our Lord predicted, that "because iniquity should abound, the love of many would wax cold" (Matt. xxiv. 12); the glorified Head of all the churches had this against the church of Ephesus, that they had "left their first love" (Lev. ii. 4); and of the Laodicean Church He says, "I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. iii. 15, 16). As the zeal of God's house consumed Himself, the Lord Jesus cannot abide a lukewarm spirit. A "fervent" or burning "spirit" is what He must seek in all who would be like Himself. **serving the Lord**—the Lord *Jesus* (compare Eph. vi. 5-8). It is one of the strangest facts in the textual criticism of the New Testament, that 'serving the time,' 'occasion,' 'opportunity'—a reading which, in the ancient MSS., would hardly differ, if at all, from the reading of our version—should have found its way into the received text, in the first form of it, though not the corrected text, and been adopted in *Luther's* version. There is respectable MS. authority for it. But the external evidence for the reading of our version and of the R. V. is decisive. It may be difficult to account for the introduction of the unguine reading; but since both words, in their contracted form, were the same three letters, some transcribers, or those who dictated to them, might think that this was what the apostle meant to express. Nor need we wonder at this, when we find many still defending it. But the sense which this reading yields, if defensible at all, seems exceedingly flat in such a triplet as that of this verse; and the ground on which it is defended shews a misapprehension of the apostle's object in this clause. It is said that to exhort Christians to serve the Lord—the most general of all Christian duties—in the midst of a set of specific details, is not what the apostle would likely do. But the sense of serving the Lord here is itself specific and restricted, intended to qualify the '*diligence*' and the '*fervency*' of the preceding clause, requiring that "*serving*" or '*pleasing*' the Lord should ever be present and uppermost as the ruling spirit of all else that they did as Christians—the atmosphere they were to breathe, whatever they were about. Nearly all critics agree in this; and *de Wette's* remark is not amiss, that the other reading savours more of worldly shrewdness than of Christian morality; adding, that while the Christian may and should *avail* himself of time and opportunity (Eph. v. 16), he may not *serve* it. 12. **rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing steadfast in prayer**. In the original, the order of the words is, lively—"In hope, rejoicing; in tribulation, enduring; in prayer, persevering." Each of these exercises helps the other. If our hope of glory is so assured, that is, a "rejoicing hope," we shall find the spirit of 'endurance in tribulation' natural and easy; but since it is "prayer" which strengthens the faith that begets hope, and lifts it up into an assured and joyful expectancy, and since our patience in tribulation is fed by this, it will be seen that all depends on our 'perseverance in prayer.' The apostle now returns to the other class of duties, the enumeration of which had but for a moment been interrupted in order to inculcate the personal ones just specified.

14 Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not.  
 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that  
 16 weep. *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not  
 high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not  
 17 wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for  
 18 evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be

*Fourth (13-21): Relative duties resumed.*

13. **communicating to the necessities of the saints:** A corrupt and absurd reading here—which means ‘imparting to the memories of saints’—is actually found not only in certain MSS., but in the best copy of the Vulgate Latin Version, and some of the Fathers. It no doubt (as *Meyer* says) owes its existence to the reverence into which the martyrs had then grown; but it shews how the text of the N. T. was apt to get perverted, and how cautiously it must be sifted: given to (*Gr.* ‘pursuing’) hospitality—‘the entertainment of strangers;’ a much needed and greatly valued duty in times of persecution. Nor are there wanting cases even still, in which the ‘love of the brethren’ is more unmistakeably and beautifully shewn in this particular form of it than in almost any other.

14. **Bless** (‘call down a blessing on’) **them that persecute you; bless and curse not.** This precept is taken from the Sermon on the Mount, which, from the numerous allusions to it, more or less direct, in different parts of the New Testament, seems to have been the storehouse of Christian morality among the churches. 15. **Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep.** What a beautiful spirit of sympathy with the joys and sorrows of others is here inculcated! But it is only one charming phase of the unselfish character which belongs to all living Christianity. What a world will ours be when this shall become its reigning spirit! Of the two, however, it is more easy to sympathize with another’s sorrows than his joys, because in the one case he *needs* us; in the other not. But just for this reason the latter is the more disinterested, and so the nobler. 16. **Be of the same mind one toward another**—cherish and manifest a lively feeling of the common bond which binds all Christians to each other, whatever diversity of station, cultivation, temperament, or gifts may obtain among them. This is finely enlarged on in the two following clauses: **Mind not high things**—cherish not ambitious or aspiring purposes and desires, which, as they spring from selfish severing of our own interests and objects, from those of our brethren, are quite incompatible with the spirit inculcated in the preceding clause: **but condescend to men of low estate.** As the noun here may be either masculine or neuter, some prefer the neuter (so the R. V.), thinking it forms a more natural contrast to the preceding clause, thus: ‘Mind not high things, but incline unto the things that are lowly.’ But the verb—which signifies to ‘be drawn away along with,’ and is used sometimes in a bad sense (as Gal. ii. 13 and 2 Pet. iii. 17)—agrees best with the *masculine* sense of our own version; and the word rendered ‘lowly’ is never used in the New Testament of *things*, but always of *persons*. **Be not wise in your own conceits.** The caution against ‘high-mindedness’ is here applied to the estimate we ought to form of our own mental character. 17. **Return to no man evil for evil** (see on ver. 14). **Have a care** (or ‘Take thought’) **for things honourable in the sight of all men.** The idea here—taken from Prov. iii. 4—is the care which Christians should take so

- possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.  
 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place  
 unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will  
 20 repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger,  
 feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou  
 21 shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of  
 evil, but overcome evil with good.

to demean themselves as to command the respect of all men. 18. If it be possible—that is, if others will let you, *as much as in you lieth*—‘so far as depends on you,’ *be at peace with all men*. The impossibility of this in some cases is hinted at, to keep up the hearts of those who, having done their utmost unsuccessfully to live in peace, might be tempted to think the failure was *necessarily* owing to themselves. But how emphatically expressed is the injunction to let nothing on our part prevent it! Would that Christians were guiltless in this respect! The next precept is evidently suggested by this one. Peace *is* broken, in spite of all that the Christian has done to preserve it, and wrong *will be* inflicted on him, which he will find it hard to bear. What then? 19. *Avenge not yourselves, beloved* (see on ver. 14), *but give place unto wrath*—the wrath of your adversary: let it spend itself. The reason for this follows: *for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord*. 20. But<sup>1</sup> (so far from avenging yourselves) *if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink*. This is taken from Prov. xxv. 21, 22, which, without doubt, supplied the basis of those lofty precepts on that subject which form the culminating-point of the Sermon on the Mount. *for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head*. This used to be understood (in Jerome’s time and by the Greek fathers, as it still is by some good interpreters) in the unfavourable sense, as if the meaning were, ‘that will be as effectual vengeance as if you were to heap burning coals on his head.’ But far more natural is the *good* sense, that by returning good for an enemy’s evil we may expect at length to subdue and overpower him—as burning coals consume all that is inflammable—into shame and repentance. The next verse seems decidedly to confirm this. 21. *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*—and then the victory is yours: you have conquered your enemy in the noblest sense.

*Note.*—What a world would this be if it were filled with Christians having but one object in life, high above every other—to “serve the Lord”—and throwing into this service ‘alacrity’ in the discharge of all duties, and abiding ‘warmth of spirit!’ (ver. 11). Oh how far is even the living Church from exhibiting the whole character and spirit so beautifully portrayed in the latter verses of this chapter! (vers. 12-21). What need of a fresh baptism of the Spirit in order to this! And how “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners,” will the Church become, when at length instinct with this Spirit!

#### POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS (CHAP. XIII.).

In such a state of things as existed at Rome when the apostle wrote, the Christians there must often have been perplexed as to the estimate they were

<sup>1</sup> Such is the correct reading here.



CHAP. XIII. 1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.

For there is no power but of God : the powers that be are  
 2 ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power,  
 resisteth the ordinance of God : and they that resist shall  
 3 receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror  
 to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid  
 of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have  
 4 praise of the same : for he is the minister of God to thee for  
 good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he  
 beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God,  
 5 a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Where-  
 fore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for

to form, and the duties they owed, to "the power" that so tyrannically and degradingly ruled there ; especially as the whole fabric of Roman society heaved with the elements of insubordination and insurrection, and as the Jews in particular had, in the days of Claudius, been banished the capital for their restless and insurrectionary tendencies (Acts xviii. 2). It was natural, therefore, to pass from the social to the political duties of believers ; and this accordingly occupies the chief portion of the present chapter.

1-7. *The Christian's relation to the civil magistrate.*

1. Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers—"the authorities that are over him." for there is no power but of God ; and the powers that be ('the existing authorities,' whatever they are) are ordained of God. 2. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God ; and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment—not from the magistrate (for that may or may not be), but from God, whose authority is therein resisted. 3. For rulers—according to the true intent of their office, are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldst thou have no fear of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. Doubtless this was written before Nero had stretched forth his hands against the Christians ; for though that would not have affected the principles here laid down, it would probably have modified the way of expressing them. 4. For he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath (to execute wrath) to him that doeth evil. 5. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath—for fear of the magistrate's vengeance, but also for conscience' sake—from conscientious reverence for God's authority.

*Note.*—It is hardly necessary to say that it is of *magistracy in general*, considered as a Divine ordinance, that this is spoken : and the statement applies equally to all forms of government, from an unchecked despotism—such as flourished when this was written, under the Emperor Nero—to a pure democracy. The inalienable right of all subjects to endeavour to alter or improve the form of government under which they live is left untouched here. But since Christians were constantly charged with turning the world upside down, and since there certainly were elements enough in Christianity of moral and social revolution to give plausibility to the charge, and tempt

6 conscience' sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this  
7 very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

8 Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he  
9 that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy  
10 neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

noble spirits, crushed under misgovernment, to take redress into their own hands, it was of special importance that the pacific, submissive, loyal spirit of those Christians who resided at the great seat of political power should furnish a visible refutation of this charge.

6. For for this cause ye pay tribute also:—'For this is the reason why ye pay the contributions requisite for maintaining the civil government,' for they are ministers of God's service (such is the meaning of the Greek word), attending continually upon this very thing.

From magistrates proper the apostle now passes to other officials. 7. Render<sup>1</sup> to all their dues: tribute—the poll and the land tax (see Matt. xvii. 25) to whom tribute *is due*; custom—export and import duty, to whom custom; fear (reverence for superiors) to whom fear; honour—the respect due to rank or distinction, to whom honour.

8-10. *The all-comprehensive relative duty—love.*

8. Owe no man anything, save to love one another—'for love is the only debt which can never be paid off, for it is always due: 'for he that loveth another—or 'his neighbour' (see Luke x. 29, 36), *Gr.* 'the other,' in relation to himself, hath fulfilled the law—for what is the law itself, but an injunction to manifest love in all relationships and in all circumstances? 9. For this (commandment), Thou shalt not commit adultery, (and this) Thou shalt not kill, (and this) Thou shalt not steal,' (and this) Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment (that is, 'and whatever other commandment there is; ' for the apostle did not mean to express any doubt of there being other commandments, but to excuse himself, for the reason about to be given, for not quoting more): it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The apostle here confines himself to the second table of the law, because it is relative duties he is treating of. 10. Love worketh no ill to his (or 'one's') neighbour; love therefore is the fulfilling of the law. As love, from its very nature, studies and delights to please its object, its very existence is an effectual security against our wilfully injuring him.

<sup>1</sup> "Therefore," of the received text, seems not genuine.

<sup>2</sup> The next clause, in the received text—"Thou shalt not bear false witness"—to complete the supposed intention of the apostle to quote the four last precepts of the Decalogue—has but slight external support; and as to internal evidence, it was much more likely to creep into the genuine text than to fall out of it.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to  
 12 awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than  
 when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at  
 hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let  
 13 us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in  
 the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering  
 14 and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on  
 the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh,  
 to fulfil the lusts *thereof*.

11-14. *General motives to the faithful discharge of all these duties.*

11. And this (ye should do), **knowing the time** (or 'season')—"these last days" (Heb. i. 2), "the end of the world" (Heb. ix. 26), that is, this final economy of grace, before the second coming of Christ, **that now it is high time** (*Gr.* 'the hour') for you to awake out of sleep—stupid, fatal indifference to eternal things: for now is salvation (in the sense of chap. v. 9, 10, viii. 24) **nearer to us than when we first believed**. This is in the line of all our Lord's teaching, which represents the decisive day of Christ's second appearing as at hand, to keep believers ever in the attitude of wakeful expectancy, but without reference to the *chronological* nearness or distance of that event. 12. **The night (of evil) is far spent, and the day (of consummated triumph over it) is at hand**: let us therefore cast off (as a worn-out dress) **the works of darkness**—all works holding of the kingdom and period of darkness, with which, as followers of the risen Saviour, our connexion has been dissolved: and let us put on the **armour of light**—the armour which befits "the children of light," armour which is described at large in Eph. vi. 11-18; see also 1 Thess. v. 8. 13. **Let us walk honestly**—'becomingly,' 'decorously,' **as in the day**. 'Men choose the night for their revels, but our night is past, for we are all the children of the light and of the day (1 Thess. v. 5): let us therefore only do what is fit to be exposed to the light of such a day.' **not in revelling and drunkenness**—varied forms of intemperance, **not in chambering and wantonness**—varied forms of impurity; the one pointing to definite acts, the other more general: **not in strife and jealousy**—varied forms of that venomous feeling between man and man which reverses the law of love. 14. **But—to sum up all in one word, put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ**—in such wise that Christ only may be seen in you (see 2 Cor. iii. 3; Gal. iii. 27; Eph. iv. 24); and **make not provision**—'take not forethought,' **to fulfil the lusts thereof**—'Direct none of your attention to the cravings of your corrupt nature, how you may provide for their gratification.'

*Notes.*—Looking back upon this chapter, one cannot but remark (1) how gloriously adapted Christianity is for human society in all conditions. As it makes war directly against no specific forms of government, so it directly recommends none. While its holy and benign principles secure the ultimate abolition of all iniquitous government, the reverence which it teaches for magistracy, under whatever form, as a Divine institution, secures the loyalty and peaceableness of its disciples, amid all the turbulence and distractions of civil society, and makes it the highest interest of all States to welcome it within their pale; especially it is the grand specific for the purification and elevation of all the social relations—inspiring a readiness to

CHAP. XIV. 1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not  
 2 to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat  
 3 all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him  
 that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him  
 which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath  
 4 received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's  
 servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he  
 5 shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One

discharge all obligations, and, most of all, implanting in its disciples that love which secures all men against injury from others, inasmuch as it is the fulfilling of the law. Christianity will yet prove itself, on a scale never yet known, to be "the salt of the earth, the light of the world." And (2) the rapid march of the kingdom of God, the advanced stage of it at which we have arrived, and the ever-nearing approach of the perfect day—nearer to every believer the longer he lives—may well quicken all the children of light to redeem the time, and, seeing that they look for such things, to be diligent that they may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless (2 Pet. iii. 14).

#### CHRISTIAN FORBEARANCE (CHAP. XIV.).

The subject here—on to chap. xv. 13—is *the consideration due from stronger Christians to their weaker brethren* (with special reference to the Jewish peculiarities), which is but the great law of love (treated of in chap. xiii.) in one particular form.

##### 1. Prefatory direction.

1. Him that is weak in faith—not 'the faith' or 'the truth believed' (as not a few, with the A. V., understand the words), 'him whose faith wants that firmness and breadth which would raise him above small scruples,' receive ye—to cordial Christian fellowship, *yet not to doubtful disputations*—not for the purpose of urging him out of his doubts and scruples, which indeed often does the reverse; whereas to receive him to full brotherly confidence and cordial interchange of Christian affection is the most effectual way of drawing them off. Two examples of such scruples are here specified, touching Jewish *meats* and *days*. 'The strong,' it will be observed, are those who held these to be abolished under the Gospel; 'the weak' are those who had scruples on this point.

##### 2-5. *Scrupulosity as to food and days.*

2. One man hath faith to eat all things—having learned the lesson taught to Peter (Acts x. 9-16, 28): but he that is weak eateth herbs—restricting himself probably to a vegetable diet, for fear of eating what might have been offered to idols, and so would be unclean (see 1 Cor. viii.).  
 3. Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge (sit censoriously in judgment upon) him that eateth; for God hath received him—as one of His dear children, who in this matter acts not from laxity, but religious principle.  
 4. Who art thou that judgest the servant of another—that is, *Christ*, as the whole context (especially vers. 8, 9) shews, to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord—such appears to be the correct

man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and

reading here—that *is*, Christ hath power to make him stand—to make good his standing; meaning, not at the day of judgment (for of that the apostle comes to treat at ver. 10); but here, in the fellowship of the Church, in spite of the censures. 5. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind—guided in such matters by his own conscientious convictions.

On the bearing of this verse on the Sabbath and the Lord's day, see *Note 9* at the close of this chapter.

6-12. *Individual responsibility to Christ, the great general rule to be observed in such cases.*

6. He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord—the Lord Christ as before. (The negative clause that follows in the received text and the A. V.—“and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*”—has next to no external authority, and got into the text, no doubt, to fill up the seemingly incomplete statement, and balance it with the following one.) and he that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks. The one gave thanks for the flesh which the other scrupled to use; while the other did the same for the herbs to which, for conscience sake, he restricted himself. 7. For none of us liveth to himself, and no one (of us) dieth to himself—according to his own ideas and inclinations. 8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. Nothing but the most rapid explanation of these remarkable words could make them endurable to any Christian ear, if Christ were a mere creature. For Christ is here—in the most emphatic terms, and yet in the most unimpassioned tone—held up as the supreme Object of the Christian's life, and of his death too; and that by the man whose horror of creature-worship was such, that when the poor Lycaonians would have worshipped himself, he rushed forth to arrest the deed, directing them to “the living God” as the only legitimate Object of worship (Acts xiv. 15). Nor does Paul teach this here, but rather *appeals* to it as a known and recognised fact of which he had only to remind his readers. And since the apostle, when he wrote these words, had never been at Rome, he could only know that the Roman Christians would assent to this view of Christ, because it was the common teaching of all the accredited preachers of Christianity, and the common faith of all Christians. 9. For to this end Christ died and lived again,<sup>1</sup> that he might be Lord of both the

<sup>1</sup> This is clearly the true reading here. How that of the received text probably grew out of it is not easily explained to the mere English reader.

revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.  
 10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set  
 at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the  
 11 judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written,

*As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,  
 And every tongue shall confess to God.*

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but  
 judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an  
 14 occasion to fall in *his* brother's way. I know, and am

dead and the living. As He died to acquire, so He rose to claim and exercise that right of purchase and dominion over His redeemed, which it is their joy to know that their death does not even interrupt, for then they are "at home with the Lord."

10. But thou (the weaker), why dost thou judge thy (stronger) brother? or thou again (the stronger), why dost thou set at naught thy (weaker) brother? for we shall all (the weak and the strong together) stand before the judgment-seat of God.<sup>1</sup> Such, beyond all doubt, is the true reading here. From the connection, one would have expected that "the judgment of Christ" (as in 2 Cor. v. 10) would have been written; and no doubt that is the reason why this reading has got into the text. But on looking more closely, we may see why the apostle did not write this, but "the judgment of God." It was evidently to accommodate his own statement to the quotation which was to follow, and the inference which he was to draw from it in the next verse: 11. For it is written (Isa. xlv. 23), *As I live, saith the Lord (Hebrew, JEHOVAH), to me every knee shall bow, And every tongue shall confess to God.* The passage, as it stands in the prophet, has no immediate reference to any 'day of judgment,' but is a prediction of the ultimate subjugation to the true God (in Christ) of every soul of man; but this of course implies that they shall bow to the award of God upon their character and actions. 12. So then (infers the apostle) each one of us shall give account of himself to God. Now, if it be remembered that all this is adduced quite incidentally, to shew that CHRIST is the absolute Master of all Christians, to rule their judgments and feelings towards each other while "living," and to dispose of them 'dying,' the testimony which it bears to the absolute Divinity of Christ will appear remarkable. On any other view, the quotation to shew that we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God would be a strange proof that Christians are all amenable to Christ.

13-23. *Christian forbearance* (resumed).

13. Let us not therefore judge ('assume the office of judge over') one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way—a sort of play upon the word 'judge'—'But if you *will* judge, let it be this, not to put a stumbling-block,' etc. 14. I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus—as "having the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16), that nothing is unclean of itself. Hence it is that he calls those "the strong" who believed in the abolition of all ritual distinctions under the Gospel (see Acts x. 15): *save that to him that*

<sup>1</sup> The received text reads "of Christ,"

persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the

accounteth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean:—*q.d.*, 'and therefore, though *you* can eat of it without sin, *he* cannot.' 15. For if because of meat thy brother is grieved (has his weak conscience hurt). The word "meat" is purposely selected as something contemptible, in contrast with the tremendous risk run for its sake. Accordingly, in the next clause, that idea is brought out with great strength: **Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.** The worth (as *Olshausen* says) of even the poorest and weakest brother cannot be more emphatically expressed than by the words, "for whom Christ died." The same sentiment is expressed with equal sharpness in 1 Cor. viii. 11. *Whatever tends to make any one violate his conscience tends to the destruction of his soul; and he who helps, whether wittingly or not, to bring about the one is guilty of aiding to accomplish the other.* 16. **Let not then your good**—*i.e.*, this liberty of yours as to Jewish meats and days, well founded though it is, **be evil spoken of**—by reason of the evil it does to others. 17. **For the kingdom of God**—or, as we should say, Religion, the proper business and blessedness for which Christians are formed into a community of renewed men in thorough subjection to God (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 20), **is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost**—a beautiful and comprehensive division of living Christianity:—"Righteousness" here has respect to *God*, denoting here 'rectitude,' in the wide sense of Matt. vi. 33; "peace" has respect to *our neighbours*, denoting 'concord' among brethren (as is plain from ver. 19: cf. Eph. iv. 3; Col. iii. 14, 15); "joy in the Holy Ghost" has respect to *ourselves*. This phrase, "joy in the Holy Ghost," represents Christians as so thinking and feeling, under the workings of the Holy Ghost, that their joy may be viewed rather as that of the blessed Agent who inspires it than their own. (See on chap. viii. 15; Gal. v. 25; Jude 20.)

**For he that herein**—in this threefold life—**serveth Christ**. Observe here again how, though we do these three things as a "kingdom of God," yet it is "*Christ*" that we serve in so doing; the apostle passing here from God to Christ as naturally as before from Christ to God—in a way inconceivable, if Christ had been viewed as a mere creature (cf. 2 Cor. viii. 21). **is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men**—for these are the things which God delights in, and men are constrained to approve (comp. Prov. iii. 4; Luke ii. 52; Acts ii. 47, xix. 20). 19. **So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.** 20. **Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God.** In whatever tends to violate a brother's conscience the apostle sees that the *incipient* destruction of God's work (for

work of God. All things indeed *are* pure ; but *it is* evil for  
 21 that man who eateth with offence. *It is* good neither to eat  
 flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother  
 22 stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou  
 faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that con-  
 23 demneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And  
 he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of  
 faith : for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

every converted man is such)—on the same principle as “he that hateth his brother is a murderer” (1 John iii. 15). All things are indeed clean—the ritual distinctions being at an end ; but *it is* evil for that man (there is criminality in the man) who *eateth with offence*—so as to stumble a weak brother. 21. *It is* good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is weak.<sup>1</sup> These three words, it has been remarked, are each intentionally weaker than the other :—“Which may cause a brother to stumble, or even be obstructed in his Christian course, nay—though neither of these may follow—wherein he continues weak ; unable wholly to disregard the example, and yet unprepared to follow it.” But this injunction to abstain from *flesh*, from *wine*, and from *whatsoever* may hurt the conscience of a brother, must be properly understood. Manifestly, the apostle is treating of the regulation of the Christian’s conduct with reference simply to the prejudices of the weak in faith ; and his directions are to be considered not as *prescriptions for one’s entire lifetime*, even to promote the good of men on a large scale, but simply as cautions against the too free use of Christian liberty in matters where other Christians, through weakness, are not persuaded that such liberty is divinely allowed. How far the *principle* involved in this may be legitimately extended, we do not inquire here ; but ere we consider that question, it is of great importance to fix how far it is here actually expressed, and what is the precise nature of the illustrations given of it. 22. *The faith which thou hast, have to thyself*—on such matters (within thine own breast) *before God*—a most important clause. It is not mere *sincerity*, or a private *opinion*, of which the apostle speaks : it is conviction as to what is the truth and will of God. If thou hast formed this conviction in the sight of God, keep thyself in this frame before Him. Of course this is not to be over-pressed, as if it were wrong to discuss such points at all with our weaker brethren. All that is here condemned is such a zeal for small points as endangers Christian love. *Happy is he that condemneth* (*Gr.* ‘judgeth’) *not himself in that which he approveth*—allows himself to do nothing but what his conscience approves, who does only what he neither knows nor fears to be sinful. 23. *But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith ; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin*—a maxim of unspeakable importance in the Christian life.

It may be well to gather up the important principles and lessons of this chapter in the following—

*Notes.*—1. There is a real distinction between what is essential to Christian fellowship and what is not, or such error on subordinate matters as

<sup>1</sup> The last two words of this verse are omitted in the R. V., but on too slender evidence, as we judge.



ought not to exclude a brother from the communion of the Church and the full confidence of his fellow-Christians. Those, therefore, who—affecting more than ordinary zeal for the honour and truth of God—deny the validity of this distinction—rigid sticklers for the necessity of orthodoxy on the most subordinate as well as the most vital points of the Christian Faith, as the condition of Church Union and Christian fellowship—will require to settle the question, not with us, but with the apostle. Acceptance with God is the proper criterion of right Christian fellowship. Differences there are even in things subordinate which may render Church Union impracticable; but the difficulty thence arising should be regarded as purely practical; the removal of it should be aimed at; and when this is attainable, every effort should be made to sweep it away, that the manifold evils, not to say the guilt, of *schism* may cease.—2. As there is much self-pleasing in setting up narrow standards of Christian fellowship, so one of the best preservatives against the temptation to do this will be found in the continual remembrance that CHRIST is the one Object for whom all Christians live, and to whom all Christians die; this would be such a living and exalted bond of union between the strong and the weak as would overshadow all their lesser differences and gradually absorb them.—3. The consideration of the common Judgment-seat at which the strong and the weak shall stand together will be found another preservative against the unlovely disposition to sit in judgment one on another (vers. 10–12).—But, 4. Though forbearance is a great Christian duty, indifference to the distinction between truth and error is not thereby encouraged. The former is, by the lax, made an excuse for the latter. But our apostle, while teaching ‘the strong’ to bear with the “weak,” repeatedly intimates in this chapter where the truth really lay on the points in question, and takes care to call those who took the wrong side the “weak.”—5. “Peace” amongst the followers of Christ is a blessing too precious to themselves, and, as a testimony to them that are without, too important to be ruptured for trifles, even though some lesser truths be involved in these. Nor are those truths themselves disparaged or endangered thereby, but the reverse. Many things which are lawful are not expedient. In the use of any liberty, therefore, our question should be, not simply, Is this lawful? but even if so, Can it be used with safety to a brother’s conscience? How will it affect my brother’s soul! It is permitted to no Christian to say, with Cain, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”—6. With what holy jealousy ought the purity of the conscience to be guarded, since every deliberate violation of it is incipient perdition! Some, who seem to be more jealous for the honour of certain doctrines than for the souls of men, enervate this terrific truth by asking how it ‘bears upon the ‘Perseverance of the saints;’ the advocates of that doctrine thinking it necessary to explain away what is meant by “destroying the work of God,” and by “destroying him for whom Christ died,” for fear of the doctrinal consequences of taking it nakedly; while the opponents of that doctrine are ready to ask, How could the apostle have used such language if he had believed that such a catastrophe was impossible? The true answer to both lies in dismissing the question as impertinent. The apostle is enunciating a great and eternal principle in Christian ethics—that *the wilful violation of conscience contains within itself a seed of destruction*; or, to express it otherwise, that the total destruction of the work of God in the renewed soul, and consequently the loss of that soul for eternity, needs only the carrying out to its full effect of such violation of the conscience. Whether such effects *do* take place, in point of fact, the apostle gives not the most distant hint here;

and therefore that point must be settled elsewhere. But, beyond all doubt, as the position we have laid down is emphatically expressed by the apostle, so the interests of all who call themselves Christians require it to be proclaimed and pressed on every suitable occasion.—7. Whenever we are in doubt as to a point of duty—where abstinence is manifestly sinless, but compliance not clearly lawful—the safe course is ever to be preferred, for to do otherwise is itself sinful.—8. How exalted and beautiful is the Ethics of Christianity—by a few great principles teaching us how to steer our course amidst practical difficulties, with equal regard to Christian liberty, love, and confidence!—9. That there is no distinction of days under the Gospel, seems as plainly taught in this chapter (ver. 5, etc.) as words could express it. But to make sure in what sense, and to what extent, this is to be taken, the reader will do well to bear in mind the following considerations:—(1) That the *rest of the seventh day*, ordained when “the works were finished at the foundation of the world,” was designed for all the inhabitants of that world, and that the seventh day was “*blessed and sanctified*” in such sense as to make the “rest” of it a “holy rest,” the very words of its consecration (Gen. ii. 2, 3) indisputably express. The attempt to evade this by explaining the words of the institution above quoted as *proleptic*, i.e. a mere anticipation of the future institution of the *Jewish Sabbath*, to prepare the way for it and give it greater sanctity in the eyes of the Jews when actually instituted, needs no refutation beyond the words themselves; for as the works of creation are for all mankind alike, and were surely designed to awaken the devout adoration of Him that made them in the breasts of all alike, so there is nothing in the words of the original institution that would lead any impartial reader of them to think of the Jews more than of any other nation under heaven. (2) That a septenary division of time was recognised and observed with religious ceremonies from the most remote antiquity in the nations of which we have any authentic records, is beyond dispute. Recent Assyrian discoveries have thrown a flood of light upon this as well as other facts, hitherto almost or altogether unknown. Nor is any astronomical explanation of this fact half so satisfactory as that of the primitive institution of one day in seven, to celebrate the “finished” work of creation by a religious resting, having diffused itself far and wide, and surviving amidst much degeneracy in other things. (3) Though the fourth commandment in the Decalogue may seem to be couched in language not so catholic as might be expected in an institution of universal application, it is not more open to this objection than the fifth commandment—“Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,” which, when the apostle quotes it to the Ephesian Christians, who were not Jews, he expresses in a catholic form, suited to every case. “Honour thy father and mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Eph. vi. 3)—teaching us how to *generalize* the fourth and every other commandment, while retaining their spirit. (4) That the Sabbath rest in Israel was a “holy rest,” not barely as *set apart* for physical rest, but with the express view to that physical rest being employed to aid in raising the thoughts and feelings above the things of the working week, and fix them on Him who made heaven and earth, is clear from such passages as Isa. lviii. 13, 14. (5) When, in the days of our Lord, the Jews had converted religion into a mechanical observance of the punctilios of outward duty, and more particularly of ceremonial ordinances, including a heap of their own traditions; and when they charged our Lord with a breach of the Sabbath rest, by allowing

CHAP. XV. 1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities  
2 of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one

those whom He miraculously healed to carry home with them the portable couch on which they had lain, He took occasion from this to remind them of the real intent of the institution for which they pretended such regard, saying, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark ii. 27). Is this language which our Lord would have used of a mere *Jewish* and *temporary* institution? If made for *man*, surely it belongs to man, and as long as man is on the earth will be "for man." But He added these most pregnant words, "So that the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (ver. 28; see also Matt. xii. 8). Was He "Lord of the Sabbath" for no other end than to abolish it? No, surely; but to *interpret* it, to *preside over* it, and, under a brighter economy which would "make all things new;" so to *transfigure* it that "in the Lord's day" it should be eclipsed—everything "old" about it disappearing; that, linked for ever to "the Resurrection and the Life," all things about it should be felt as new—even its physical rest; and as for its religious significance, the finished works of creation shining in the light of a "finished work" higher still. Accordingly, the word "Sabbath" in the New Testament is never used of the first day of the week, but exclusively of the day preceding. And the apostles, quick to perceive their Master's design in appearing to them, after His resurrection, *never but on the first day of the week*, from that day forward held all their stated meetings with their converts on that day, and soon it came to be known as the Christian's day of rest, in a perfectly new sense—"the Lord's day." We say, their *day of rest*. For (6) all experience proves that a stated period of rest is indispensable for the preservation of the animal frame, and facts have only confirmed the suitableness of one day in seven to man; but since to reach this would be hopeless, if left to human arrangement to fix the *time and duration* of it, nothing but some Divine provision for securing it would ever be effectual; and that provision is no other than the Divine institution of the Lord's day, superseding, for all the permanent and highest ends of it, the preceding form of rest. And so soon as this Christian nation shall come to think, with Protestant Germany and Switzerland, that the Lord's day has no Divine authority, but is to be treated as a mere festival—like Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter, which the Church observes—so soon will continental laxity in the observance of it, and continental practices utterly alien to its blessed design, from which this country is now happily free, certainly follow. We have dwelt the longer on this subject, because, while not satisfied with those explanations of the apostle's language which would persuade the reader that the apostle *has no view here to the weekly Sabbath at all*—we are equally dissatisfied with the opposite extreme, which maintains that distinction of days has no place *in any sense* under the Gospel.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED AND CONCLUDED (CHAP. XV. 1-13).

1. We then that are strong—on such points as have been discussed, the abolition of the Jewish distinction of meats and days under the Gospel, *ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves*—ought to think less of what we may lawfully do, than of how our conduct will affect

3 of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The 4 reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the 5 scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another 6 according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus 7 Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also 8 received us to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus

others. 2. Let every one of us please—that is, lay himself out to please, his neighbour (not indeed for his mere gratification, but) for his good (with a view) to (his) edification. 3. For even Christ pleased not (lived not to please) himself; but, as it is written (Ps. lxxix. 9), The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. 4. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning ('instruction'); that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope:—*q.d.*, 'Think not that because such portions of Scripture relate immediately to Christ, they are inapplicable to you; for though Christ's sufferings, as a Saviour, were exclusively His own, the *motives* that prompted them, the *spirit* in which they were endured, and the great *principle* that ruled His whole work—self-sacrifice for the good of others—furnish our most perfect and beautiful model; and so all Scripture that relates to these is for our instruction.' And since the duty of *forbearance*, the strong with the weak, demands "patience," and one needs "comfort" in order to sustain patience, all those Scriptures that tell of *patience* and *consolation*, particularly of the patience of Christ and the consolation that sustained Him under it—are our appointed and appropriate nutriment, inspiring us with "hope" of the time when these will be no longer needed. For the same connexion between "patience" and "hope," see on chap. xii. 12; see also 1 Thess. i. 3. 5. Now the God of patience and consolation. Such beautiful names of God are taken from the graces which He inspires: as "the God of hope" (ver. 13), "the God of peace" (ver. 33), etc. grant you to be like-minded—"of the same mind," according to Christ Jesus. It is not mere unanimity which the apostle seeks for them; for unanimity may be in evil, which is to be deprecated. But it is "according to Christ Jesus"—after the sublimest model of Him whose all-absorbing desire was to do, 'not His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him' (John vi. 38). 6. that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—rather, 'that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' the mind and the mouth of all giving harmonious glory to His name. What a prayer! And shall this never be realized on earth?

7. Wherefore—Returning to the point, receive ye one another, as Christ also received us—"received you" is clearly the true reading, to the glory of God. If Christ received us, and bears with all our weaknesses, well may we receive and compassionate one another; and by so doing God will be glorified. 8. Now—"For" is certainly the true reading: the apostle is

Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of  
 9 God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers: and  
 that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is  
 written,

For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles,  
 And sing unto thy name.

10 And again he saith,

Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again,

Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles;

And laud him, all ye people.

12 And again, Esaias saith,

There shall be a root of Jesse,

And he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles;

In him shall the Gentiles trust.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in

merely assigning an additional motive to Christian forbearance: I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision—a remarkable expression, meaning ‘the Father’s Servant for the salvation of the circumcision (or, of Israel)’ for the truth of God—to make good the veracity of God towards His ancient people; to confirm the (Messianic) promises made unto the fathers. In order to cheer the Jewish believers, whom he might seem to have been disparaging, and to keep down Gentile pride, the apostle holds up Israel’s salvation as the primary end of Christ’s mission. But next, after this, He was sent to the Gentiles. 9. and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. A number of quotations from the Old Testament here follow, to shew that God’s plan of mercy embraced, from the first, the Gentiles along with the Jews. as it is written (Ps. xviii. 49), For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. 10. And again he saith (Deut. xxxii. 43), Rejoice, ye Gentiles, (along) with his people (Israel). This is according to the LXX. The absence of “with” in the Hebrew might suggest another sense, but the context confirms that here given. 11. And again (Ps. cxvii. 1), Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him—the various nations outside the pale of Judaism. 12. And again, Isaiah saith (chap. xi. 10), There shall be a root of Jesse—not ‘the root whence Jesse sprang;’ but ‘the root to spring from Jesse,’ that is, from Jesse’s son, David (see Rev. xxii. 16). and he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles; on him shall the Gentiles hope. So the LXX., in substantial, though not verbal agreement with the original. 13. Now the God of hope (see on ver. 5, etc.). This seems a closing prayer, suggested not so much by the immediately preceding context as by the whole subject-matter of the Epistle thus far. fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope. As peace and joy are the natural fruits of faith (chap. v. 1, 2, 11; Gal. v. 22), so hope of the glory of God necessarily accompanies or flows from all these, especially from faith, which is the root of the whole. Hence, the degree in which one of these is possessed and exercised will be the measure in which all of them are found in play. And when the God of hope fills us with all joy and peace

believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

- 14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able  
 15 also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me  
 16 of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up

in believing, we cannot fail to *abound* in hope. in the power of the Holy Ghost—whose office it is, in the economy of redemption, to inspire believers with all gracious affections.

*Note.*—This prayer of ver. 13 sheds an interesting light on the relation of “hope” to “faith” in the usage of the New Testament and in the Christian life. As *hope* is not fixed upon the *past* work of Christ, so none of the fruits of that past work are ascribed to hope. We are never said to hope for pardon, peace, reconciliation, etc. The apostle says indeed to the Galatians (ver. 5), ‘We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of (justifying) righteousness by faith;’ but this is a statement of *doctrine*, in opposition to the expectation of being justified by works: as if he said, ‘Be not misled by those who would persuade you that your faith in Christ will avail you nothing “except ye be circumcised and keep the law of Moses;” for we who have been taught by the Spirit, whether Jews or Gentiles, hope for no righteousness but by faith alone.’ Hope, then, fastens on nothing past, but exclusively on what is *future* in the work of Christ, and so is *subsequent* to, or immediately flows from faith. There can be no “hope” till first there is “faith,” as this prayer indeed implies.

CONCLUSION, IN WHICH THE APOSTLE APOLOGIZES FOR THUS WRITING TO ROMAN CHRISTIANS, EXPLAINS WHY HE HAD NOT YET VISITED THEM, ANNOUNCES HIS FUTURE PLANS, AND ASKS THEIR PRAYERS FOR THE COMPLETION OF THEM (CHAP. XV. 14–33).

14. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness—of hearty readiness to do what I have been enjoining on you. filled with all knowledge, of the truth I have expounded, able also—without my intervention, to admonish one another.  
 15. But I write the more boldly unto you in some measure, as putting you in remembrance, because of the grace that was given me of God, that I should be a minister of Jesus Christ (the service which the word here expresses is *official* service, as distinguished from ordinary service), of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles—compare Eph. iii. 8, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” In this statement, of his special commission to the Gentiles, we have another proof that this Epistle was meant in the first instance for a *Gentile* church (see on chap. i. 13). *ministering* (*Gr.* ‘ministering in sacrifice’), the Gentiles converted through his ministry being

of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the  
 17 Holy Ghost. I have therefore whereof I may glory through  
 18 Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I  
 will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ  
 hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by  
 19 word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the  
 power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and  
 round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel  
 20 of Christ; yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not  
 where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another  
 21 man's foundation; but, as it is written,

To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see:

And they that have not heard shall understand:

22 for which cause also I have been much hindered from  
 23 coming to you. But now having no more place in these  
 parts, and having a great desire these many years to come  
 24 unto you, whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will  
 come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to

viewed as a sacrifice offered up to God, as the following words show to be the meaning. **that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made (might prove) acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost—**alike of the typical offerings and the fruits of the Christian ministry. 17. **I have therefore whereof to glory** (*Gr.* 'my glorying') **in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God.** 18. **For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me** (*Gr.* 'of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought through me')—to go beyond what Christ *hath* wrought through me, **to make the Gentiles obedient** (*Gr.* 'for the obedience of')—that they might be brought to "the obedience of faith," **by word and deed—**by preaching and working, which working is next explained. 19. **in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Ghost.** This seems to refer the efficacy of the word preached, as well as of the supernatural attestations, to the same Holy Spirit; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum—lying to the extreme north-western boundary of Greece, and corresponding to the modern Croatia and Dalmatia (2 Tim. iv. 10, and consult Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. ii. No. 4; and see Acts xx. 1, 2). **I have fully preached the gospel of Christ:** 20. **but making it my study** (the same words as in 1 Thess. iv. 11 and 2 Cor. v. 9) **so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; but (might act so) as it is written** (Isa. lii. 15), **They shall see, to whom no tidings of him came: And they who have not heard shall understand.**

22. **Wherefore also—**being so long occupied in breaking fresh ground, I was hindered these many times from coming to you (see on chap. i. 9–11): 23. **but now, having no more any place in these regions—**no more unbroken ground, no spot where Christ has not been preached, **and having these many years a longing to come unto you, 24. whensoever I go unto Spain, for I hope to see you in my journey, and to be brought**

- be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be some-  
 25 what filled with your *company*. But now I go unto Jerusalem  
 26 to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of  
 Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for  
 27 the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased  
 them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles  
 have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty  
 28 is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When there-  
 fore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this  
 29 fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that,  
 when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the  
 blessing of the gospel of Christ.  
 30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's  
 sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together

on my way thitherward by you, if first I shall have been satisfied with your company:—‘I should indeed like to stay longer with you than I can hope to do, but to some extent at least I must have my fill of your company.’ 25. but now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. The sentence is broken, the apostle’s eager mind going off, after the word “Spain,” to tell them, by the way, what he expected by his visit to the Roman Church; and on taking up his sentence again, he does so in a somewhat altered form. Not perceiving this, and supposing part of the sentence must have dropped out, some scribes inserted after “Spain” the words “I will come to you,” which are found in our A. V. But they have next to no support, and the weight of evidence against them is overwhelming. I go to Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints—in the sense explained in the next verse. 26. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints which are at Jerusalem (see Acts xxiv. 17). The word expresses the satisfaction they had in doing this. 27. They have been pleased indeed, and their debtors they are: for if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things. Compare 1 Cor. ix. 11; Gal. vi. 6; and see Luke vii. 4. It is the same principle as when, asking Philemon to be kind to Onesimus for his sake, he delicately hints how well he might ask this favour of one who owed his own soul to him (Philem. 19). 28. When therefore I have accomplished this, and have sealed (delivered over safely) to them this fruit (of the faith and love of the Gentile converts), I will go on by you unto Spain (see on ver. 24). 29. And I know that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of [the gospel of] Christ. (The bracketed words are wanting in nearly all the principal authorities. To *add* them would be most natural, but how to account for their dropping out i. they were there at first is far from easy.) The apostle was not disappointed in the confidence he here expresses, though his visit to Rome was in very different circumstances from what he expected (Acts xxviii. 16, to the end). 30. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit—not the love which the Spirit bears to us, but that love which He kindles in the hearts of believers towards each other:—‘By that



31 with me in *your* prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judæa; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of  
 32 the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will  
 33 of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Saviour whose name is alike dear to all of us, and whose unsearchable riches I delight to proclaim, and by that love one to another which the blessed Spirit diffuses through all the brotherhood, making the labours of Christ's servants a matter of common interest to all, I beseech you *that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me*—implying that he had his grounds for anxious fear in this matter. 31. *that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient*—that refuse to the Gospel the obedience of faith, as in chap. ii. 8. in Judæa. He saw the storm that was gathering over him in Judæa, which, if at all, would certainly burst upon his head when he reached the capital; and the event too clearly shewed the correctness of these apprehensions: *and that my ministrations which I have for Jerusalem* (see on vers. 25–28) *may be acceptable to the saints*. Nor was he without apprehension lest the opposition he had made to the narrow jealousy of the Jewish converts against the free reception of their Gentile brethren should make this gift of theirs to the poor saints at Jerusalem less welcome than it ought to be. He would have the Romans, therefore, to join him in wrestling with God that this gift might be gratefully received, and prove a cement between the two parties. But further, strive with me in prayer, 32. *that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God* (Acts xviii. 21; 1 Cor. iv. 19, xvi. 7; Heb. vi. 3; Jas. iv. 15), *and with you be refreshed*—or, 'find rest' or 'refreshment'; after all his labours and anxieties, and so be refitted for future service. 33. *Now the God of peace be with you all*—of peace in its widest sense; with God, first, "through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Thess. v. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 16; Phil. iv. 9); then, the peace which this diffuses among all the partakers of it (1 Cor. xiv. 33; 2 Cor. xiii. 13; see on chap. xvi. 20); and more widely still, that peace which the children of God, in beautiful imitation of their Father in heaven, are called and privileged to diffuse far and wide through this sin-distracted and divided world (chap. xii. 18; Matt. v. 9; Jas. iii. 18; Heb. xii. 14). Amen.

*Notes.*—1. Did "the chiefest of the apostles" apologize for writing to a Christian church which he had never seen, and a church that he was persuaded was above the need of it, save to "stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance" (2 Pet. i. 13, iii. 1); and did he even put this upon the sole plea of apostolic responsibility? (vers. 14–16). What a contrast is thus presented to hierarchical pride, and in particular to the affected humility of the bishop of this very Rome! How close the bond which the one spirit draws between ministers and people—how wide the separation produced by the other!—2. There is in the Christian Church no real priesthood, and none but figurative sacrifices. Had it been otherwise, it is inconceivable that the 16th verse of this chapter should have been expressed as it is. Paul's only priesthood and sacrificial offerings lay, first, in ministering to them, as "the apostle of the Gentiles," not the sacrament, with the 'Real Presence' of Christ in it, or the sacrifice of the mass, but "the

Gospel of God," and then, when gathered under the wing of Christ, presenting them to God as a grateful offering, "being sanctified (not by sacrificial gifts, but) by the Holy Ghost" (see Heb. xiii. 9-16). 3. Though the debt we owe to those by whom we have been brought to Christ can never be discharged, we should feel it a privilege, when we have it in our power, to render them any lower benefit in return (vers. 26, 27). 4. Formidable designs against the truth and the servants of Christ should, above all other ways of counteracting them, be met by combined prayer to Him who rules all hearts and controls all events; and the darker the cloud, the more resolutely should all to whom Christ's cause is dear "strive together in their prayers to God" for the removal of it (vers. 30, 31). 5. Christian fellowship is so precious, that the most eminent servants of Christ, amidst the toils and trials of their work, find it refreshing and invigorating; and it is no good sign of any ecclesiastic, that he deems it beneath him to seek and enjoy it even amongst the humblest saints in the Church of Christ (vers. 24, 32).

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CHAPTER XVI.—CONCLUSION, EMBRACING SUNDRY SALUTATIONS, CAUTIONS, AN ENCOURAGEMENT, A BENEDICTION, AND A CLOSING DOXOLOGY.

1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant  
2 of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

*Recommendation of Phæbe to the Roman Church* (1, 2). 1. I commend unto you Phæbe our sister, who is a servant—or, 'deaconess,' of the church that is at Cenchrea—the eastern port of Corinth (see on Acts xviii. 18). That in the earliest churches there were deaconesses, to attend to the wants of the female members, there is no good reason to doubt. So early at least as the reign of Trajan, we learn from Pliny's celebrated letter to that Emperor—A.D. 110 or 111—that they existed in the Eastern churches. Indeed, from the relation in which the sexes then stood to each other, something of this sort would seem to have been a necessity. Modern attempts, however, to revive this office have seldom found favour; either from the altered state of society or the abuse of the office, or both. Yet in Protestant Prussia, and in the Lutheran missions of the East, they seem to be a real success. 2. that ye receive her in the Lord—that is, as a genuine disciple of the Lord, so as becometh saints—as saints should receive saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter she may have need of you—some private business of her own: for she herself also hath been a succourer of many, and of mine own self (see Ps. xli. 1-3; 2 Tim. i. 16-18).

*Sundry salutations* (3-16). 3. Salute Prisca—the true reading here beyond doubt, but this is only a contracted form of "Priscilla" (as in 2 Tim. iv. 19), as "Silas" of "Silvanus:" and Aquila. It will be observed that

- 3, 4 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.  
 5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epænetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto  
 6 Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

the wife is here named before the husband, as also in Acts xviii. 18 (and ver. 26, according to what we take to be the true reading). From this we may infer that she was the more energetic of the two, of superior mind, and more helpful to the Church. 4. *who for my life laid down their own necks*—that is, risked their own lives to save that of the apostle. The occasion referred to was either that of his first visit to Corinth (Acts xviii. 6, 9, 10), or more probably what took place at Ephesus (as recorded in Acts xix. 30, 31; and cf. 1 Cor. xv. 32). They must by this time have returned from Ephesus—where we last find them in the history of the Acts—to Rome, whence the edict of Claudius had banished them (Acts xviii. 2); and if they were not the leading members of that Christian community, they were at least the most endeared to our apostle. *unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles*—whose special apostle this dear couple had rescued so heroically from imminent danger. 5. *and salute the church that is in their house*—no doubt, the Christian assembly that statedly met there for worship. And it is natural to suppose, from his occupation as a tent-maker (Acts xviii. 3), that his premises would accommodate larger gatherings than those of most others. Probably this devoted couple had written to the apostle such an account of the stated meetings at their house as made him feel at home with them, and include them in this salutation, which doubtless would be read at their meeting with peculiar interest. *Salute Epænetus, who is the first-fruits* (the first convert) *of Asia unto Christ*. The received text says “of Achaia;” but as this was not the fact, so neither is it what the apostle says. The true reading, beyond all question, is, ‘the first-fruits of Asia unto Christ’—that is, Proconsular Asia. (See on Acts xvi. 6.) In 1 Cor. xvi. 15 it is expressly said that “the household of Stephanas was the first-fruits of Achaia.” And though, if Epænetus was a member of that family, the two statements might be reconciled, according to the received text, there is no need to resort to that supposition, as we have seen that the true reading is otherwise. This Epænetus, as the first believer in Roman Asia, was dear to the apostle (see Hos. ix. 10; and Mic. vii. 1).

None of the names mentioned from vers. 5–15 are otherwise known. One wonders at the number of them, considering that the writer had never been at Rome. But as Rome was then the centre of the civilised world, to and from which journeys were continually taken to the remotest parts, there is no great difficulty in supposing that so active a travelling missionary as Paul would, in the course of time, make the acquaintance of a considerable number of the Christians then residing at the capital.

6. *Salute Mary, who bestowed much labour on us*. External evidence is certainly in favour of “labour on you.” But the whole strain of these salutations is in favour of the received text; and every student of the text of the New Testament knows that the first letter of these two pronouns—which were pronounced almost alike—is so constantly interchanged, that the context

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were  
 8 in Christ before me. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the  
 9 Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my  
 10 beloved. Salute Apelles, approved in Christ. Salute them  
 11 which are of Aristobulus' *household*. Salute Herodion my  
 kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus,  
 12 which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa,  
 who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which  
 13 laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus, chosen in the

ought to be our chief directory as to which is right in each case. 7. Salute Andronicus and Junias, or Junia (if a female, but the male sense seems preferable), my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners—but on what occasion it is impossible to tell, for (as he tells us in 2 Cor. xi. 23) he was “in prisons more abundantly,”—who are of note among the apostles—not as some critics, ‘noted apostles,’ but as here (and so the R. V.)—who also have been in Christ before me. The apostle writes as if he envied them this priority in the faith. And, indeed, if to be “in Christ” be the most enviable human condition, the earlier the date of this blessed translation the greater the grace of it. This latter statement about Andronicus and Junias seems to throw some light on the preceding one. Very possibly they may have been among the first-fruits of Peter’s labours, gained to Christ either on the day of Pentecost or on some of the succeeding days. In that case they may have attracted the special esteem of those apostles who for some time resided chiefly at Jerusalem and its neighbourhood; and our apostle, though he came late in contact with the other apostles, if he was aware of this fact, would have pleasure in alluding to it. 8. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord—an expression of dear Christian affection. 9. Salute Urbanus (it is a man’s name), our fellow-worker in Christ. 10. Salute Apelles, the approved in Christ—or, as we should say, ‘that tried Christian;’ a noble commendation. Salute them that are of the household of Aristobulus. It would seem from what is said of Narcissus in the following verse, that this Aristobulus himself had not been a Christian, but that the Christians of his household simply were meant; very possibly some of his slaves. 11. Salute Herodion my kinsman—(see on ver. 7). Greet them of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord—which implies that others in his house, including probably himself, were not Christians. 12. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord—two active females. Salute Persis the beloved (another female), which laboured much in the Lord—referring, probably, not to official services, such as would fall to the deaconesses, but to such higher Christian labours—yet within the sphere competent to woman—as Priscilla bestowed on Apollos and others (Acts xviii. 18). 13. Salute Rufus, the chosen in the Lord—meaning, not ‘who is one of the elect,’ as every believer is, but ‘the choice,’ or ‘precious one,’ in the Lord (see 1 Pet. ii. 4; 2 John 13). We read in Mark xv. 21 that Simon of Cyrene, whom they compelled to bear our Lord’s cross, was “the father of Alexander and Rufus.” From this we naturally conclude that when Mark wrote his Gospel, Alexander and Rufus must have been well known as Christians among those by whom he expected his Gospel to be first read;

- 14 Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with  
 15 them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.  
 16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

and, in all likelihood, this was that very "Rufus;" in which case our interest is deepened by what immediately follows about his mother. and (salute) **his mother and mine**. The apostle calls her 'his own mother,' not so much as our Lord calls every elderly female believer His mother (Matt. xii. 49, 50), but in grateful acknowledgment of her motherly attentions to himself, bestowed no doubt for his Master's sake, and the love she bore to His honoured servants. To us it seems altogether likely that the conversion of Simon the Cyrenian dated from that memorable day when "passing (casually) by, as he came from the country" (Mark xv. 21), "they compelled him to bear the" Saviour's cross. Sweet compulsion, if what he thus beheld issued in his *voluntarily* taking up his own cross! Through him it is natural to suppose that his wife would be brought in, and that this believing couple, now "heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Pet. iii. 7), as they told their two sons Alexander and Rufus what honour had unwittingly been put upon their father at that hour of deepest and dearest moment to all Christians, might be blessed to the inbringing of both of them to Christ. In this case, supposing the elder of the two to have departed to be with Christ ere this letter was written, or to have been residing in some other place, and Rufus left alone with his mother, how instructive and beautiful is the testimony here borne to her!

14. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas. This is, beyond doubt, the right order of these names: and the brethren which are with them. 15. Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. These have been thought to be the names of ten less notable Christians than those already named. But this will hardly be supposed if it be observed that they are divided into two pairs of five each, and that after the first of these pairs it is added, "and the brethren which are with them," while after the second pair we have the words, "and all the saints which are with them." This, perhaps, hardly means that each of the five in both pairs had 'a church at his house,' else probably this would have been more expressly said. But at least it would seem to indicate that they were each a centre of some few Christians who met at his house—it may be for further instruction, for prayer, for missionary purposes, or for some other Christian objects. These little peeps into the rudimental forms which Christian fellowship first took in the great cities, though too indistinct for more than conjecture, are singularly interesting. Our apostle would seem to have been kept minutely informed as to the state of the Roman church, both as to its membership and its varied activities, probably by Priscilla and Aquila. 16. Salute one another with a holy kiss. (So 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 1 Thess. v. 26; 1 Pet. v. 14.) The custom prevailed among the Jews, and doubtless came from the East, where it still obtains. Its adoption into the Christian churches, as the symbol of a higher fellowship than it had ever expressed before, was probably as immediate as it was natural. In this case the apostle's desire seems to be that on receipt of his Epistle, with its greetings, they should in this manner expressly testify their

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause  
divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye  
18 have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such  
serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by  
good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the  
19 simple. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men.  
I am glad therefore on your behalf; but yet I would have  
you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning  
20 evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your  
feet shortly.

Christian affection. It afterwards came to have a fixed place in the Church service, immediately after the celebration of the Supper, and continued long in use. In such matters, however, the state of society and the peculiarities of different places require to be studied. **All the churches of Christ salute you.** The word "all" gradually fell out, as seeming probably to express more than the apostle would venture to affirm. But no more seems meant than to assure the Romans in what affectionate esteem they were held by the churches generally; all that knew he was writing to Rome having expressly asked their own salutations to be sent to them. (See v. 19.)

*Cautions (17-19).* 17. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing divisions and occasions of stumblings contrary to the doctrine which ye learned, and avoid them. The fomenters of "divisions" who are here meant are probably those who were unfriendly to the truths taught in this Epistle; while those who caused "occasions of stumbling" were probably those referred to in chap. xiv. 15, as haughtily disregarding the prejudices of the weak. The direction as to both is, first, to "mark" such, lest the evil should be done ere it was fully discovered; and next, to "avoid" them (cf. 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14), so as neither to bear any responsibility for their procedure nor seem to give them the least countenance. 18. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ (such appears clearly to be the true reading), but their own belly—not in the grosser sense, but in the sense of 'living for low ends of their own' (comp. Phil. iii. 19); and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent—the unwary, the unsuspecting (see Prov. xiv. 15). 19. For your obedience—your tractableness, or readiness to be led (as the close of the verse seems to shew is the meaning here), is come abroad unto all men. I rejoice therefore for you, but I would have you wise unto that which is good and simple—'harmless,' as in Matt. x. 16, from which the warning is taken, unto that which is evil: 'Your reputation among the churches for subjection to the teaching ye have received is to me sufficient ground of confidence in you; but ye need the serpent's wisdom to discriminate between transparent truth and plausible error, with that guileless simplicity which instinctively cleaves to the one and rejects the other.'

*Encouragement and benediction (20).* 20. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The apostle encourages the Romans to persevere in resisting the wiles of the devil, with the assurance that, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, they are "shortly" to receive their discharge, and have the satisfaction of 'putting their feet upon the neck' of that formidable Enemy—a symbol familiar, probably in all languages, to express not

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

- 21 Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and  
 22 Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I Tertius, who wrote  
 23 *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord. Gaius mine host, and  
 of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus, the chamberlain  
 of the city, saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

- 24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

only the completeness of the defeat, but the abject humiliation of the conquered foe (see Josh. x. 24; 2 Sam. xxii. 41; Ezek. xxi. 29; Ps. xci. 13). Though the apostle here styles Him who is thus to bruise Satan, "the God of peace," with special reference to the "divisions" (ver. 17) by which the Roman Church was in danger of being disturbed, this sublime appellation of God has here a wider sense, pointing to the whole 'purpose for which the Son of God was manifested, to destroy the works of the devil' (1 John iii. 8); and indeed this assurance is but a reproduction of the first great promise, that the Seed of the woman would bruise the Serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15). **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.** The "Amen" here has no authority. What comes after this, where one would have expected the Epistle to close, has its parallel in Phil. iv. 20, etc., and, being in fact common in epistolary writings, is simply a mark of genuineness.

*The salutations of the apostle's friends at Corinth* (21-23). 21. **Timothy my fellow-worker** (see Acts xvi. 1-5). The apostle (as Bengel says) mentions him here rather than in the opening address to this church, as he had not been at Rome. **and Lucius**—not Luke; for the fuller form of 'Lucas' is not "Lucius," but 'Lucanus.' The person meant seems to be 'Lucius of Cyrene,' who was among the "prophets and teachers" at Antioch with our apostle before he was summoned into the missionary field (Acts xiii. 1). **and Jason** (see Acts xvii. 5). He had probably accompanied or followed the apostle from Thessalonica to Corinth; **and Sosipater** (see Acts xx. 4), **my kinsmen, salute you.** 22. **I Tertius, who wrote the epistle**—as the apostle's amanuensis or penman, **salute you in the Lord.** So usual was it with the apostle to dictate instead of writing his Epistles, that he calls the attention of the Galatians to the fact that to them he wrote with his own hand (Gal. vi. 11). But this Tertius would have the Romans to know that, far from being a mere scribe, his heart went out to them in Christian affection; and the apostle, by giving his salutation a place here, would shew what sort of assistants he employed. 23. **Gaius my host, and (the host) of the whole church, saluteth you** (see Acts xx. 4). It would appear that this Gaius was one of only two persons whom Paul baptized with his own hand (see 3 John 1). His Christian hospitality appears to have been something uncommon. **Erastus, the treasurer of the city**—doubtless the city of Corinth (see Acts xix. 22; 2 Tim. iv. 20), **saluteth you, and Quartus the brother**—or 'our brother,' as Sosthenes and Timothy are called, 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1 (*Gr.*). Nothing more is known of this Quartus. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.** This repetition of the benediction of ver. 20, though supported by respectable evidence, seems clearly the result of a confusion, arising from causes not easily explained to the mere English reader. While the evidence against it is decidedly the strongest, even those authorities that support it vary amongst themselves.

*Concluding doxology* (25-27). The genuineness of this whole doxology has

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my  
 gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the  
 revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the  
 26 world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures  
 of the prophets, according to the commandment of the ever-  
 lasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of  
 27 faith; to God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for  
 ever. Amen.

been questioned on next to no ground. It is wanting in no MS. but one which, when alone, is of no value; and even in it there is a blank space, implying that something is wanting. A number of MSS. place it at the end of chap. xiv., where it is quite unsuitable. 25. *Now to him that is able to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ*—in conformity with the truths of that Gospel which I preach, according to the revelation of the mystery (see on chap. xi. 25) which hath been kept silent (undisclosed) through times eternal (during all past time), 26. *but now is manifested*. The reference here is to that peculiar feature of the Gospel economy which Paul himself was specially employed to carry into practical effect, and to unfold by his teaching—the introduction of the Gentile believers to an equality with their Jewish brethren, and the new, and, to the Jews, quite unexpected form which this gave to the whole Kingdom of God (cf. Eph. iii. 1–10, etc.). This the apostle calls here a mystery hitherto undisclosed, but now fully unfolded; and his prayer for the Roman Christians, in the form of a doxology to Him who was able to do what he asked, is that they might be established in the truth of the Gospel, not only in its essential character, but specially in that feature of it which gave themselves, as Gentile believers, their whole standing among the people of God. *and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations for* (in order to) *the obedience of faith*. Lest they should think, from what he had just said, that God had brought in upon His people so vast a change on their condition, without giving them any previous notice, the apostle here adds that, on the contrary, “the Scriptures of the prophets” contain all that he and other preachers of the Gospel had to declare on these topics, and indeed that the same “eternal God,” who “from eternal times” had kept these things hid, had given “commandment” that they should now, according to the tenor of those prophetic Scriptures, be imparted to every nation for their believing acceptance. 27. *To the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to whom [be]—‘To Him, I say, be the glory’ for ever. Amen*. At the outset of this doxology, it will be observed that it is an ascription of glory to the *power* that could do all this. At its close it ascribes glory to the *wisdom* that planned and that presides over the gathering of a redeemed people out of all nations. The apostle adds his devout “Amen,” which the reader may well fervently echo.

*Notes.*—I. In the minute and delicate manifestations of Christian feeling, and lively interest in the smallest movements of Christian life, love, and zeal, which are here exemplified, combined with the grasp of thought and elevation of soul which this whole Epistle displays, as indeed all the writings of our apostle, we have the secret of much of that grandeur of character



which has made the name of Paul stand on an elevation all its own in the estimation of enlightened Christendom in every age, and of that influence which, under God, beyond all the other apostles, he has already exercised, and is yet destined to exert, over the religious thinking and feeling of men. Nor can any approach him in these peculiarities without exercising corresponding influence on all with whom they come in contact.—2. “The wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove”—in enjoining which our apostle here only echoes the teaching of His Lord (Matt. x. 16)—is a combination of properties, the rarity of which among Christians is only equalled by its vast importance. In every age of the Church there have been real Christians whose excessive study of the serpent’s wisdom has so sadly trenchanted upon their guileless simplicity, as at times to excite the distressing apprehension that they were no better than wolves in sheep’s clothing; nor is it to be denied, on the other hand, that, either from inaptitude or indisposition to judge of character and of measures with manly discrimination, many eminently simple, spiritual, devoted Christians, have throughout life exercised little or no influence on any section of society around them. Let the apostle’s counsel on this head (ver. 19) be taken as a study, especially by young Christians, whose character has yet to be formed, and whose permanent sphere in life is but partially fixed; and let them prayerfully set themselves to the combined exercise of both those qualities. So will their Christian character acquire solidity and elevation, and their influence for good will be proportionably extended.—For, 3. Has “the everlasting God” “commanded” that the Gospel “mystery,” so long kept hid, but now fully disclosed, shall be “made known to all nations for the obedience of faith” (ver. 26)? Then, what “necessity is laid upon” all the Churches, and every Christian, to send the Gospel “to every creature”? And we may rest well assured that the prosperity or decline of churches, and of individual Christians, will have not a little to do with their faithfulness or indifference to this imperative duty.

The ancient Subscription at the end of this Epistle—though of course of no authority—appears to be in this case quite correct.

THE END.

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